

**BELONGING WHILE BLACK:
A CHOREOGRAPHY OF IMAGINED SILENCE IN EARLY MODERN AFRICAN
DIASPORIC DANCE**

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Submitted to the Graduate Faculty of the
Kenneth P. Dietrich School of Arts and Sciences in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy

University of Pittsburgh

2016

UNIVERSITY OF PITTSBURGH
KENNETH P. DIETRICH SCHOOL OF ARTS AND SCIENCES

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September 26, 2016

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In this dissertation, I examine specifically how and why historical narratives of African American theatre begin with minstrelsy and Jim Crow's dancing body. Working with the process of historical production from Michel-Rolph Trouillot's *Silencing the Past*, I trace the related emergence of an imagined and Europeanist dancing body alongside the imagined and Black dancing body. I use *imagined*, following Susan Leigh Foster, because written sources and historical narratives do not facilitate physical or corporeal access. In Early Modern archives, I reveal how European dance masters and philosophers elevated court dancing and noble decorum into the imagined and ideal human. The imagined Europeanist and noble dancing body became the principal historiographic human figure in legitimated dance histories. Concurrently, I show how European travel writing negated imagined Black dancing bodies as inhuman, savage and bestial bodies, disqualifying them as imagined dancing bodies for inclusion in historical narratives. Thus, when scholars go to archived sources, with choreographed ballet and imagined Europeanist dancing bodies as the legitimated carriers of dance history, Thomas Dartmouth Rice and early minstrel performers emerge as the first qualified and documented dancing bodies moving through sub-Saharan repertoires. By further recuperating seventeenth-century, European-language sources on leaping and mock combat, I question the exclusion of airborne and martial repertoires from historical narratives of Black dance from West Africa to the United States. I argue that the process of silencing airborne leaps and staged combat from West African belonging lays the philosophical and historiographic groundwork for originating and containing sub-Saharan influences within plantation and minstrelsy belonging. By revealing where we are, philosophically speaking, in historical narratives of Black dance, and how we got to this point, I propose an extensive re-mapping of sub-Saharan influence through and across the Sahara and Mediterranean, prior to and alongside the trans-Atlantic trade.

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Over the years, I have been fortunate to learn from and work under many theatre professionals and educators, all of whom contributed to my intellectual and artistic development. I first want to acknowledge those who served on my committee at various stages: Keith Byron Kirk, Bruce McConachie, Michele Reid-Vazquez, Daniel Banks, and Shanara Reid-Brinkley. Their questions and advice helped me throughout the work. I appreciate, as well, the opportunities to learn under noted scholars at the University of Pittsburgh: Attilio Favorini, Marcus Rediker, Reid Andrews, Patrick Manning, and Jocelyn L. Buckner. The Department of Theatre Arts, as a whole, provided significant support. In addition to those already mentioned, I am thankful for the assistance of Connie Markiw, Bria Walker, Annmarie Duggan, Josh Storey, Laura McCarthy, and Pam Weid. I want to thank my final committee members, Kathleen George, Michelle Granshaw, and Neil Doshi, for all the time they took to discuss and think through the project. I am incredibly grateful to Lisa Jackson-Schebetta, for believing in this project and the questions I set out to ask. Without her generosity and trust, this dissertation would have turned out quite differently.

An Andrew Mellon Predoctoral Fellowship from the University of Pittsburgh, and two summer fellowships from the Department of Theatre Arts at the University of Pittsburgh, helped fund a portion of the archival research for this dissertation. A Mary McEwen Schimke Fellowship from Wellesley College helped with childcare costs for my son, while I researched, taught, and wrote. I am thankful beyond words, for all of the preschool educators and friends who loved and played with my son, and taught him new ways of looking at the world.

My parents and siblings, grandparents, aunts, uncles, and cousins, have traveled alongside me since before I found theatre, and I hold their perspectives in mind always. My many friends and mentors as mentioned below, have discussed and argued, debated and listened, all while offering me the benefit of trying out my opinions and ideas in productive and conversational spaces. I landed in theatre somewhat by accident, in Mills E. Godwin High School, when Mac Damron led the department. From the friends I made, and the many backstage crew positions I held, I learned how to experiment and fail, how to work collaboratively, and above all, I learned how to listen to multiple sides on complicated topics. I am grateful for all the late night conversations and escapades with friends like Bobby Vrtis, Nicole Laudani, Rachel Tompkins, Lauren Kostas, Matt Bolte, Virginia Leigh Jackson, Mike Church, Stephen Bristow, Andrew Spanberger, and Leah McCombe Butler.

My time at the University of Richmond shaped my theatrical and academic journey in ways I am still discovering. I would not have made it this far without the mentorship and guidance of educators and artists like Walter Schoen, Reed West, Anne Van Gelder, Myra Daleng, Rich Mason, Phil Hayes, Dorothy Holland, Donna Hickey, and Debbie Mullins. I am indebted to the lifelong friends I made at Richmond, especially (but by no means limited to): Melinda Scott, Darlington Howland, Mike Jarett, Matt DiCintio, Gina Pisasale, Jennifer Rutkoski, Jaime Hughes, Dominic Finney, Jess Finney, Denise Olivieri, Jen Dillow Royer, Ben Royer, Carolyn Bennett Glauda, Christopher Gamblée-Wallendjack, Dan Stackhouse, Jamie Cooper Ramsburg, Nedra McClyde, Robbie Asplund, Jeff and Laura Roudabush, Julie Ann McMillan Boles, Jess Nelson, Giles Fox, Aly Wepplo, Andy Nagraj, Jonathan Spivey, Ted Carter, Seth Austin, Mike Brayden, Jed Shireman, Laura Corless, Paul Cline, Corinne Brennan, Caroline Weist, Tyler Evans, and Marissa Beringer.

While in Charlottesville at Live Arts, I hit my groove as a freelance dramaturg, learning under community leaders and artists, like Satch Huizenga, Richelle Claiborne, Ray Smith, Andrew Towns, Amdie Mengistu, Olivia Hessing, Steph Finn Spicer, Ray Nedzel, Row Halpin, Grady Smith,

John Gibson, Kay Ferguson, Mendy St. Ours, Denise Stewart, and Chris Estey. Charlottesville has an incredible intellectual community, and I would be remiss if I left out my friends and colleagues, who listened to my research questions and debated the meaning of life at Bodo's, along the downtown mall, or over drinks at South Street: Erica Schultz Hagan, Molly Minturn, Mick Anderson, Melanie Mayberry, Daniel Eggleston, Alvin Edwards, Brendan Wolfe, Rae Burnett, Rebecca Goodwin, Jeremiah Hargrove, Christi French, Clay, Vicki, and Daniel Marsh, Robert and Tracy Wallace, and Hope and Rydell Payne. Charlottesville remains a place of inspiration and support for me and my husband, Preston. We have felt, especially, continuing support, love, and encouragement from Mary Ann and April Terry, and Tommy, Kemp, Harrison, Matthew, Edward, and Virginia Hill.

At the University of Pittsburgh, I had the privilege of working with several talented graduate and undergraduate students, as artists and scholars. I am honored to have collaborated with and learned alongside Deirdre O'Rourke, Ariel Nereson, David Bisaha, Erin O'Malley, David Peterson, Kristi Good, Ashley Birt, John Michnya, Tom Pacio, Christiana Molldrem Harkulich, Inga Meier, Tommy Costello, Grant Williams, Tim Zeddies, Vivian Appler, Rohini Chaki, Claire Syler, Rachel De Soto Jackson, Elizabeth Mozer, Maria Enriquez, Peter Wood, Diego Villada, Meredith Conti, Lofton Durham, Emma Freeman, Le'Mil Eiland, Dashanna Terry, and KC Euler. David Bisaha, Emma Freeman, Christiana Molldrem Harkulich, Dashanna Terry, and Deirdre O'Rourke read and commented on early versions, providing invaluable feedback. I was privileged to work with incredible creative teams on *Funnyhouse of a Negro*, *In the Heights*, and *The Last Days of Judas Iscariot*. I am deeply appreciative all those students at the University of Pittsburgh who sat in my classes, and discussed theatre, dance, and history with me over the years. My students from Contemporary Global Stages: Performing African Diasporas hold a special place in my journey as an educator and scholar. Their questions, which revealed their desires for a better future, give me hope.

My two trips to East Africa changed how I saw the world. I doubt if I would have learned to ask about Africa's place in history, were it not for the time I spent traveling there. I still remember the conversations with Cornel Onyango, Melanie Wilson, Isaac Ngere Konguka, Anne Wambui, Lucy Wairimu, Dan, Asalika, and Aguvasu. I remain indebted to their early instruction in Swahili, and patience with my *mzungu* questions. From the students at Karagwe Secondary School, and Leonora Kivuva, Sharon and Larry Pumpelly, Furaha Kikwa, Wende Mponzi, Kai Aldin Mutembei, FEMK Senkoro, Rael Sopster, Macrina Lelei, Evan Mwangi, Keguro Macharia, Aaron Bady, Shailja Patel and Kasongo Kapanga, I learned a great deal more about Swahili and East African history.

My week at Northwestern University's summer symposium, "Black/Solo/Woman," opened my eyes to new ways of thinking through scholarship and performance. I had the privilege of meeting and working on a variety of projects with Sharrell Luckett, Kantara Souffrant, Kristin Moriah, Kristie Soares, Shana Russell, Madison Alexander Moore, Vilde Aaslid, Catherine Rodríguez, Rhaisa Williams, Jade Huell, Lisa Sloan, Jessica Lopez Lyman, Jasmine Jamillah Mahmoud, D'Lynn Jacobs, Alessandra Williams, Colleen Daniher, and Summer Kim Lee. From the scholarship and artistry of E. Patrick Johnson, Ramón Rivera-Servera, Stephanie Batiste, Francesca Royster, Misty DeBerry, Sharon Bridgforth, Omi Osun Jones, Lenelle Moïse, and Nadine George-Graves, I saw how to engage in collaborative pedagogy through research and performance. I remain inspired by their examples. Kantara Souffrant, Kristin Moriah, and Sharrell Luckett offered insight throughout this dissertation process, in comments and feedback, as well as general advice.

To Preston, who alone knows the extent of our collective labor over and for this dissertation: thank you for your unflinching honesty, never letting me quit, and for your unwavering strength and trust in me.

To Malakai, our beloved son, may you grow to love and honor all of your heritages.

FOREWORD

When I chose to write a dissertation so deeply embedded with slavery and minstrelsy, I debated whether or not to take this journey. I grew up in the US South, surrounded by textbooks and adults who insisted on silencing slavery's significance in history, and playing with White children who used our family's Mexican heritages as a qualification pushing us towards blackness. They did this, even though my family has no documented or visible continental African or sub-Saharan heritages. They made it clear, repeatedly, we did not belong in whiteness. My family had no racialized home. Even the division of demographic categories made our lack of belonging clear. Throughout middle school and high school, I would face the bulleted list: White (not Hispanic or African); American Indian or Alaskan Native; Black (not White); Hispanic (African or Caribbean, not White). We were Mexican, so we were not White. Both sides of my family had American Indian heritages, but we belonged to no federally recognized Tribal Nation. We were Mexican, but we had no African heritages. Every time, clenching my teeth, I would select Hispanic. I would internally apologize to African Americans for trespassing on their racialized home, and simultaneously curse the strictures of whiteness for forcing me into a demographic of not-belonging.

In the beginning stages of my research, I would close scholarship or travel writing in mid-sentence, overwhelmed by the enormity of casual death and documented indifference to African suffering. I became concerned that my work, even as invested as it was in writing sub-Saharan Africans as making performance history happen, would not be able to counter or outweigh the breadth of violence wrought through coercive spectatorships of European-descended writers and

performers. One morning, I woke up with the remnants of a dream seared in my memory. It was a single image, rows of people with visible sub-Saharan African heritages, looking out, as if they were looking out of a proscenium frame into an audience. Only their faces and shoulders were visible; their skin and eyes were clear and healthy; their hair varied in color and texture. They stood under warm lighting, in an interior location, but it was not the slave ship. Their expressions did not convey appreciation or consolation. What I took from that image was this: they were not my ancestors, but they were standing witness. Their directive: *do the work*. It is my hope that the following pages, written with the intent of respecting the millions who lived and died, who danced and sang and fought, honors the dead whom written history can never recover or reconcile, and honors those who made their presence known as witnesses.

FORMATTING NOTES

When referring to an ethnic, racial, or implied continental belonging, the words *Black* and *White* will be capitalized.

Words in languages other than English will appear in plain text, except when the syntax of a sentence requires emphasis.¹

Spelling and emphasis from scholarly sources have been retained. In the interest of facilitating clarity, emphasis in written sources from the Early Modern era was not consistently retained.

¹ Daniel José Older, “Why We Don’t Italicize Spanish,” in YouTube, August 4, 2014, accessed July 14, 2014, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=24gCI3Ur7FM>, “You know when you should italicize another language? When there’s emphasis on it. Just like with any other word you would italicize.”

INTRODUCTION:
DIFFICULT BELONGING, DIASPORIC ESCAPE

“To what extent is African American theatre fundamental to American theatre as a whole?”²

In my dissertation, I am analyzing and challenging the consistency of how we write histories of sub-Saharan–influenced performance practices in African Diasporic and Atlantic circulation. By *how we write histories*, I mean the philosophical process of making choices to create or produce historical narratives. These philosophical choices include, but are by no means limited to, *where* and *when* and *with whom* we begin narrating histories of how sub-Saharan persons and their performance practices moved from African regions out into the rest of the world. Despite the critiques and interventions by such scholars as Imtiaz Habib, Paul Tiyambe Zeleza, and Kate Lowe, sub-Saharan persons and their performance practices primarily enter historical narratives within and because of the trans-Atlantic slave trade. The inverse implication of this choice is, then: without slavery, sub-Saharan persons and their performance practices, namely, dance and ritual, would have remained isolated within sub-Saharan regions, thereby untouched or uncorrupted by European exploitation and oppression. So when we open a collection of essays on African American performance and theatre, for example, we find narratives beginning in the Middle Passage, and extending into plantation

² “African American Theatre” in *Theatre Survey* 47:2 (Nov 2006): 195 (191-197).

economies.³ Eventually, in the nineteenth century, blackface minstrelsy performers stage an appropriated semblance of sub-Saharan-influenced dancing, music, and dialects under cover of burnt cork and greasepaint. In these narratives, persons with sub-Saharan heritages are always already enslaved, and fighting to free themselves from the coercive yoke of trans-Atlantic appropriation of their bodies and labors, where labors include but are not limited to, dance, ritual, and music.

My dissertation offers a history of a history, of how we came to categorize certain dance practices as *Black*, meaning originating from within sub-Saharan regions and carried to the world by persons with sub-Saharan heritages, and as *White*, meaning originating from within northern and western European regions and carried to the world by persons with these same heritages. I am working through the philosophical choices made in relation to sub-Saharan-influenced performance practices: *how* we came to categorize certain kinds of danced movements and rhythms as sub-Saharan and Black, in explicit oppositional counterpoint to those we came to categorize as European and White. Specifically, I am exploring how *Black* dance came to be categorized as primarily originating from percussive and polyrhythmic steps and gestures, and earth-focused and flowing postures. This category exerts significant influence, to the extent that multiple sixteenth and seventeenth-century European-language sources on West African dance, which describe leaping and

³ Paul Carter Harrison, "Praise/Word," in *Black Theatre: Ritual Performance in the African Diaspora*, eds. Paul Carter Harrison, Victor Leo Walker (II), Gus Edwards, 1-10. (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2002); Samuel A. Hay, *African American Theatre: A Historical and Critical Analysis* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994); Errol G. Hill and James V. Hatch, *A History of African American Theatre* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003); Victor Leo Walker II, "Introduction," *Black Theatre: Ritual Performance in the African Diaspora*, eds. Paul Carter Harrison, Victor Leo Walker (II), Gus Edwards, 13-17. (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2002).

mock combat alongside dancing, do not make it into historical narratives following trans-Atlantic circulations of Black dance.

In order to disentangle the philosophical process of forging Black and White dance, I focus on the deployment of imagined dancing bodies in written sources pertaining to European court dance practices and written sources pertaining to West African dance practices. I position the dancing bodies as imagined, because written sources do not enable physical access so much as they depict or bring forth dancing bodies for their readers' imaginations. By placing the rise of written sources on ballet, the first dance to receive its own historical narrative in Europe, in conversation with European travel writing in West Africa, I reveal the gradual emergence of *imagining* and writing a verticalized, Europeanist dancing body, in contrast to the gradual emergence of *imagining* and writing a fluid, or bent, sub-Saharan dancing body.

To examine imagined dancing bodies in the philosophical processes of creating historical narratives, I bring in Michel-Rolph Trouillot's explication of "the fundamentally processual character of historical production" from *Silencing the Past*.⁴ Trouillot details four steps in the process of producing historical narratives, emphasizing the contingent significance of presence and absence, mentions and silences. By drawing out history as a process of production, he exposes the complex interplay between qualifying a written source as evidentiary fact, preserving a written source in an archive, using an archive to recall what happened in history, writing a narrative, and finally legitimating a particular narrative as history.⁵

In historical narratives of dance, imagined dancing bodies serve as sources of embodied knowledge; that is, historians wield imagined dancing bodies to substantiate their claims of

⁴ Michel-Rolph Trouillot, *Silencing the Past: Power and the Production of History* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1995) 28.

⁵ Trouillot, *Silencing the Past*, 26.

continuity and change. The written sources used by historians, the documents accessed in archives and brought together to produce narratives of what happened, over time, likewise invoke and rely upon embodied knowledge carried through imagined dancing bodies. In order to preserve evidence of what happened on the dance floor, in the moment of performance, European dance masters and travelers created or fashioned imagined dancing bodies. By further articulating imagined dancing bodies and their embodied knowledge to specific geographic locations, European dance masters and travelers forged embodied memory, in writing. Over time, from the Italian Renaissance to the court of King Louis XIV, the imagined dancing body of European court ballet emerged as embodied and vertical evidence of the ideal human. Over time, in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, the imagined and Black dancing body emerged as embodied and bestial evidence of sub-Saharan savagery and non-humanity, even in airborne leaps and mock combat.

Written sources on imagined dancing bodies, then, produce European conquest as civilizing and humane. The process of producing imagined Black dancing bodies in written sources exposes what Harvey Young terms misrecognition or misperception. That is, “an *idea* of the black body ... chronicles how the misrecognition of individuated bodies as “the black body” creates similar experiences.”⁶ While European dance masters persistently related imagined dancing bodies in European courts to noble virtue and vertical decorum, European travel writers persistently related imagined dancing bodies in West African locations to beasts and savages, inexorably drawn down towards the ground. *Imagining* bodies enacting Black dance, in writing, became the depiction of bestial movements, bound to and returning to the earth. Imagining Black dancing bodies became the misrecognition of sub-Saharan-influenced movements and rhythms as bestial, or savage and non-

⁶ Harvey Young, *Embodying Black Experience: Stillness, Critical Memory, and the Black Body* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2010) 4.

human.⁷ *Imagining* bodies enacting European dance, in writing, became the composition of the upright and vertical decorum of court ballet.

Pushing this even further, however, writing imagined dancing bodies in European court dances produced the philosophical parameters of danced movements and rhythms qualified and legitimated for inclusion in historical narratives. Likewise, writing imagined bodies enacting sub-Saharan dances generated the philosophical parameters for displacing or *silencing* sub-Saharan danced movements and rhythms for inclusion in historical narratives. Put differently, *Black* dance emerged as evidence of how sub-Saharan persons required the civilizing and humane presence of European court decorum and ballet. Sub-Saharan movements and rhythms became the *lack* of knowledge of dance, the silenced and negated counterpoint to the writing and preserving and elevating of European ballet as embodied knowledge of the human history of dance. Hence, while ballet received the first historical narrative devoted entirely to a set of dancing practices in the late sixteenth century, we do not see any historical narratives devoted to Black dance as embodied, human, and sub-Saharan knowledge until the twentieth century. This dissertation is a history of a history of how sub-Saharan bodies became silenced and negated from humanity, thereby silencing and displacing their dances from qualifying as embodied knowledge for historical preservation.⁸

⁷ Imagined dancing bodies emerge in written compositions, and subsequently affect perceptions of heritage *in motion* and in the moment of performance. *Imagining* dancing bodies, in relation to sub-Saharan bodies, produces misrecognition. By mapping the processes of imagining sub-Saharan dancing bodies *as* Black and *through* Early Modern European travel writing, I locate philosophical precedents for Young's later finding of misperception.

⁸ Imagined *Black* dancing bodies thus entail a fundamental absence of humanity and a concomitant lack of history worth recording and preserving for future generations. In this time period, from the fifteenth through the seventeenth centuries of the Common Era, blackness related to persons with imputed sub-Saharan heritages, as well as to persons with imputed Muslim, Romani, and Jewish heritages. Cf Jack Forbes, *Africans and Native Americans: The*

THE “FEELING OF JUMP”⁹

*The ultimate mark of power may be its invisibility; the ultimate challenge, the exposition of its roots.*¹⁰

How do you write a history in African American theatre? Do you originate from within African rituals? Do you originate the narrative from blackface minstrelsy or plantation performance? I ask these questions to highlight the contentious process of categorizing persons and embodied practices into sub-Saharan heritages, a process fraught with implications of dehumaning and unpersoning.¹¹ The longer I spend with the sources, archives, and narratives on sub-Saharan persons and their performance practices, the more it seems that ground on which historical knowledge stands presents imminent threats of violence.¹² I am concerned, as Michel-Rolph Trouillot says, with “how history works,” in that “history only reveals itself through the production of specific narratives.”¹³ In relation to African American theatre, dance, and ritual, I am concerned with “how history works” to

Language of Race and the Evolution of Red and Black Peoples (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1993); Jonathan Schorsch, *Jews and Blacks in the Early Modern* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004); Wieke Vink, *Creole Jews: Negotiating Community in Colonial Suriname* (The Netherlands: Brill, 2010) 132-134, 251.

⁹ Keguro Macharia, “fugitivity,” in Gukira, accessed July 6, 2016,

<https://gukira.wordpress.com/2013/07/02/fugitivity/>; riffing on Shailja Patel, *Migritude* (New York: Kaya Press, 2020) 124.

¹⁰ Trouillot, *Silencing the Past*, xix.

¹¹ Alexander Weheliye, *Habeas Viscus: Racializing Assemblages, Biopolitics, and Black Feminist Theories of the Human* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2014); Saidiya Hartman, “Venus in Two Acts,” in *Small Axe* 2, 12:2 (June 2008): 1-14.

¹² Borrowed and adapted from August Wilson, “The Ground on Which I Stand,” in *Callaloo* 20:3 (Summer 1997): 493-503.

¹³ Trouillot, *Silencing the Past*, 25.

consign sub-Saharan influences to the plantation realm and minstrelsy stage. It is my contention that these “specific narratives” operate with what Trouillot terms a “bundle of silences.”¹⁴ In the pages to follow, the silences I explore will converge to silence imagined Black dancing bodies as sources of knowledge outside of the above parameters.¹⁵ More specifically, the philosophical and narrative containment of imagined Black dancing bodies within plantation and minstrelsy origins prohibits sub-Saharan persons from significantly influencing or contributing to European dance practices. By attending to these “silences of various kinds and degrees,” we see how the process of creating sources and facts for preservation as archival evidence both enables and prohibits readers from imagining *what happened* in history and *who caused* history to happen.¹⁶

My dissertation is motivated by fundamental questions of belonging, of how we implicitly or explicitly claim specific geographic and temporal *homes*. If, as Robert Farris (RF) Thompson and Brenda Dixon Gottschild insist, we can locate evidence of sub-Saharan, that is Africanist, aesthetic continuity in “get-down” postures and percussive, polyrhythmic gestures, then why do many Europeans write of leaping and mock combat in sixteenth and seventeenth-century West Africa? Were these European travelers just inventing or copying earlier sources, like that of Alvise Cadamosto in the fifteenth century? Did West Africans stop enacting mock combat or athletic and agile leaps after the seventeenth century? Why do scholars like John Thornton legitimate West *Central* African sources on leaping and mock combat, and, subsequently, scholars like Cécile Fromont follow leaping and mock combat in king ceremonies from the Kongo kingdom to Brazil? I am troubled by how leaping and mock combat are allowed to belong in trans-Atlantic circulation

¹⁴ Trouillot, *Silencing the Past*, 27.

¹⁵ Trouillot, *Silencing the Past*, 27.

¹⁶ Trouillot, *Silencing the Past*, 48.

from West Central Africa to the Americas, but how they are excluded from belonging in trans-Atlantic circulation from West Africa to the Americas.

I am concerned by the silencing of leaping and mock combat in narratives of West African dance, and the related silences of leaping and mock combat from narratives of West African influences in United States dancing. The silencing of these particular movements, the exclusion of these sources from historical narratives of Black dance, reverberates out into a broader historiographic kinship. Black dance scholars, from Lynne Fauley Emery to Katrina Dyonne (KD) Thompson, define the scope of their investigations based on earth-focused and “get-down” postures, and percussive, polyrhythmic steps and gestures. That is, philosophically, they locate and analyze trans-Atlantic continuity and change in Black dance by bringing together written sources on these particular aesthetic qualities and performance modes. Historiographically, sub-Saharan-influenced dancing *belongs* in trans-Atlantic, historical narratives, by virtue of written sources attesting to the performance and enactment of Africanist parameters. But how did we get to this point? How did we get to historical narratives of African American theatre and performance, which exclude, nearly without exception, bodies engaged in airborne movements and staged combat?

In other words, how did we get to historical narratives of African American theatre and performance which only include, nearly without exception, bodies engaged in percussive and polyrhythmic movements in exclusive relation to the earth? These particular dancing bodies, as *imagined*, that is written and depicted by scholars ranging from Gottschild to KD Thompson, bear close resemblance to the broken and bent bodies in both *Dancing the Slaves* and *Jim Crow*. *Dancing the Slaves* was the torturous and infamous exercise instituted by slave traders. They forced captive Africans to dance, in chains, on board deck, in order to exercise enslaved bodies, decrease

loss of life on board, and increase their returns on investment.¹⁷ Dancing the Slaves originates the coerced and enslaved, Black dancing body intended for plantation labor and exploitation.

Jim Crow, the character invented by Thomas Dartmouth (TD) Rice, danced an “accompanying jig and shuffle” to the lyrics of “Jump, Jim Crow.”¹⁸ This “spectacular performance of disability” included “a pathetic limp and crooking his shoulder,” which TD Rice claimed he took from an elderly, enslaved stable hand in Kentucky.¹⁹ Jim Crow’s broken jumps and wheeling about originate the enslaved Black dancing body appropriated for minstrelsy profit and consumption by urban and working class audiences in the United States. By drawing our attention to these embodied similarities or resemblances, which are not *equivalencies*, I am asking us to consider: what if the physical violence of trans-Atlantic enslavement, such as weighted chains and the cutting of Achilles’

¹⁷ Thomas F. DeFrantz, “Foreword: Black Bodies Dancing Black Culture – Black Atlantic Transformation,” in *EmBODYing Liberation: The Black Body in American Dance*, eds., Dorothea Fischer-Hornung and Alison D. Goeller, 11-16 (Hamburg: LIT Verlag Münster, 2001) 11, 14, 16; Lynn Fauley Emery, *Black Dance: From 1619 to Today* (Pennington, New Jersey: Princeton Book Company, 1988) 1-14; Katrina Hazzard-Gordon, *Jookin’: The Rise of Social Dance Formations in African-American Culture* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1990) 3-62; Marcus Rediker, *The Slave Ship: A Human History* (New York: Penguin, 2007) 7, 19, 58, 237; Hortense Spillers, “Mama’s Baby, Papa’s Maybe: An American Grammar Book,” in *Diacritics* 17:2 “Culture and Counteremory: The “American” Connection” (Summer 1987): 67 (64-81); Sterling Stuckey, “Christian Conversion and Dance,” in *Dancing Many Drums: Excavations in African American Dance*, ed. Thomas F. DeFrantz, 39-58. (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 2002) 40.

¹⁸ Marian Hannah Winter, “Juba and American Minstrelsy,” in *Inside the Minstrel Mask: Readings in Nineteenth-Century Blackface Minstrelsy*, eds., Annemarie Bean, James V. Hatch, Brooks McNamara, 223-241. (Hanover: Wesleyan University Press, 1996) 225.

¹⁹ Sean Murray, “That ‘Weird and Wonderful Posture’: Jump, “Jim Crow” and the Performance of Disability,” in *The Oxford Handbook of Music and Disability Studies*, ed., Blake Howe, et. al. 357-370 (Oxford: Oxford University Press) 357, 363; cf Daphne Brooks, *Bodies in Dissent: Spectacular Performances of Race and Freedom, 1850-1910* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2006) 17.

tendons in repeat runaways, prohibits us from imagining enslaved bodies carrying and transmitting embodied memories of airborne movements as knowledge of dance from their sub-Saharan homelands?

I am here to examine “how history works” or “how history reveals itself in the production of specific narratives,” and thus query the historiographic kinship between figuratively *grounding* West African-descended performance practices and containing them within the plantation realm and minstrelsy stage. By explicating the “fundamentally processual character of historical production,” I show how the process of silencing airborne leaps and staged combat from West African belonging lays the philosophical and historiographic groundwork for originating African American dance and theatre with Dancing the Slaves and Jim Crow, respectively. It is my contention, throughout this dissertation, that the silencing of leaping and mock combat contribute to “the production of specific narratives,” which confine sub-Saharan-influenced dancing within plantation and minstrelsy belonging. My aim is to reveal how we got to where we are and also open up further routes of inquiry for writing historical narratives of African American theatre and dance in trans-Atlantic circulation. I begin by departing from the home of African American theatre, to which I have alluded repeatedly. I do so to assess if I will return the project there. Alternately, my analysis may lead me to a new home (or homes) to claim for my dissertation. I show my work and use my process to chart the analytical foundations of this project.

Instead of claiming African American theatre, for instance, I could also claim my dissertation for Black theatre. Although, maybe Black American theatre offers a clarified idea of home, a place to honor the specificity of American geographic locations and African heritages. But, am I writing in American-as-hemispheric or American-as-United-States? Do I claim geographies based in continental land masses, or geographies based on oceanic currents, like Black Atlantic or Atlantic African? Do I stay with theatre, even as I’m focusing on Black dance? What do I even mean by

Africa and *Black*? For the moment, *Black* will function as an equivalent to *sub-Saharan*, and *African* will mean *continental* African. I will elaborate more on these choices below. I introduced this debate, as a way to introduce my process for debating the geographic and territorial names I claim for my project's historical home. As Trouillot reminds us, "Names set up a field of power," and "terminologies demarcate a field, politically and epistemologically."²⁰ I am debating how to name and claim my dissertation's home, how to make choices within highly contested ontologies of being, which will affect the kind of narrative I create in the pages to follow.

In history, ontologies of being include geographic locations and temporal placements to forge metaphysical belonging. Ontologies of being *arrange* existences in relation to places and times. Or, as Trouillot puts it, an ontology generates, or creates, "an implicit organization of the world and its inhabitants."²¹ Ontologies give us the lay of the land, so to speak, delineating the where and when. An ontology of being establishes an order for a historical narrative, defining who belongs with whom, and in which places at what times. People live in historical narratives because they lived in actual worlds, and records of their presence remain in documents passed down, generation after generation, in archives. People can live in actual worlds and not in archives that make historical narratives, just as they can live in archives that make narratives and not in actual worlds. Going even further, people who have lived in actual worlds may never live in historical narratives, and people who live in narratives may never have lived in actual worlds based on how the archives preserve them.

The first English edition of Duarte Lopes's and Filippo Pigafetta's knowledge was published as "A Report of the Kingdome of the Congo." This edition places Lopes's departure in 1588 *and* in

²⁰ Trouillot, *Silencing the Past*, 115.

²¹ Trouillot, *Silencing the Past*, 73.

the year Dom Sebastião died in the Battle of Alcácer Quibir (Battle of the Three Kings), thereby misplacing Lopes in actual worlds.²² Dom Sebastião died in the Battle of Alcácer Quibir in 1578; either Lopes left the decade after this battle, or in 1578, the year of this battle.²³ If, for instance, Lopes left in 1588, he has only three years to travel throughout the interior of West Central Africa, get shipwrecked in the Americas, return to Portugal, make his way to Italy to relay his account to Pigafetta for Pigafetta to write and publish in 1591. Moreover, if he leaves in 1578, he leaves an independent Portugal. If he leaves in 1588, he leaves a Portugal bound in the Iberian Union with Spain. The English translation of the report creates a contested ontology of being for Lopes: his actions may either relate to an independent Portugal, or a dominant Imperial Spain. He may have taken fifteen years to accomplish his lengthy journey, or three.

The ontologies of being, the implicit metaphysical claims of belonging I choose for my dissertation will setup the kinds of historiographic kinships into which I write. How I form ontological existences in my dissertation reveals where and when I think persons, knowledges, and performance practices *belong* in actual (lived), archival (documented and preserved), and historical (written and narrated) worlds. To place facts or events into historical narratives *arranges* lived experiences and knowledges into an ontological or metaphysical existence in historical places and through historical times. Ontologies of being make claims on where and when people lived, where and when things happened, and what these events might mean when placed into a narrative.

²² Duarte Lopes and Filippo Pigafetta, “A report of the Kingdome of Congo, a region of Affrica,” in *Purchas his Pilgrimes: in five booke: the first, containyng the voyages and peregrinations made by ancient kings ... and others, to and thorow ...*, trans. Abraham Hartwell and ed. Samuel Purchas, Vol. 2, bk 7, chap IIII [sic], 986-1026 (London: Printed by William Stansby for Henrie Fetherstone, 1625) 986.

²³ Patrick Manning, *The African Diaspora: A History Through Culture* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2009)

Trouillot elaborates further on the metaphysical implications of the historical process, showing in detail the process of moving from sources into events, facts into archives, and narratives into history. He distinguishes “the moment of fact creation (the making of *sources*)” from “the moment of fact assembly (the making of *archives*),” in order to illuminate the generation or creation of silences.²⁴ He qualifies sources as “artifacts or bodies that turn an event into a fact,” that is, sources are the documented or material remains of who was there, what happened, and what was leftover afterwards for future generations to encounter.²⁵ In other words, “history begins with bodies and artifacts.”²⁶ The name of my dissertation, its home, establishes the temporal and spatial parameters into which I can *arrange* bodies and artifacts as the origins or beginnings of my narrative.

With the Duarte Lopes example, Lopes is a source, and so is Filippo Pigafetta. Their bodies, and the records they left behind, mark the first step of Trouillot’s historical process. The decade in which Lopes left will affect his metaphysical belonging, to either Portugal or Imperial Spain, and thus how the written report obtains meaning in future archives and narratives. Lopes’s belonging is metaphysical, because the geographic location implies a philosophical belonging to a nation or an empire. It is not just which national archives should house Lopes’s and Pigafetta’s report, but also into which national or imperial narrative will their report qualify as a significant event? Will his trip belong as part of Portugal’s promising global future cut off with the death of Dom Sebastião? Or will his trip belong as part of Spain’s imperial designs on a global future? At the source level, metaphysical belonging or ontological kinship reverberates out into the assembling of archives, creation of narratives, and legitimizing of a narrative as credible history. The year of Lopes’s

²⁴ Trouillot, *Silencing the Past*, 26.

²⁵ Trouillot, *Silencing the Past*, 48.

²⁶ Trouillot, *Silencing the Past*, 29.

departure affects the legibility of Portugal as a national entity, or its presence in world history as independent or its contingent silence within Spain's empire.

I am also focusing in on this particular source, because Lopes and Pigafetta mention a West Central African dancing performance, a moment which does not make it into narratives of African Diasporic performance. At the Kongo court, Lopes and Pigafetta note, "they dance and move their feet, as it were in a Moresco, with great gravetie and sobrietie."²⁷ The Italian original spells "Moresca," and Abraham Hartwell, the English translator, uses the masculine form of the Italian word rather than translating it to the related English term of Morris. I am interested in exploring why this source, this report, has not so far attained metaphysical belonging within African American or African Diasporic historical narratives of performance. In other words, why do some performance events make it into narratives as evidence of various sub-Saharan influences, and others make it no further than their original record? Once we uncover the interrelated processes of historical production which exclude this source, will it be possible for us to rearrange available sources or shift the parameters of belonging, in order to include this Kongo court performance as an event in African Diasporic histories of performance? Will we be able to map this *silenced* Kongo court performance into the Americas?

Trouillot also observes, "presences and absences [in] sources ... or archives ... are neither neutral nor natural," and "absence itself is constitutive of the process of historical production."²⁸ Absence constitutes historical production, because it is impossible to include every detail within a source. It is then subsequently impossible to include every source within an archive. Trouillot

²⁷ Duarte Lopes and Filippo Pigafetta, "A report of the Kingdome of Congo, a region of Affrica," in *Purchas his Pilgrimes ...*, trans. Abraham Hartwell and ed. Samuel Purchas, Vol. 2, bk 7, chap IIII [sic], 986-1026 (London: Printed by William Stansby for Henrie Fetherstone, 1625) 1018-1019.

²⁸ Trouillot, *Silencing the Past*, 48, 49.

comments, “If the account was indeed fully comprehensive of all facts it would be incomprehensible.”²⁹ Comprehensibility comes with consequences; these choices, at the source and archival level, have implications. Even if we did qualify this event for inclusion in African Diasporic narratives, some silences remain. We do not know who danced at the Kongo court, or who witnessed the performance, in terms of the people groups represented at court. We do not know how often this kind of dance recurred in West Central African regions.

Not only do we lack Kongolese context of dances like this, we also lack context of Lopes and Pigafetta’s baseline for comparison. We do not know precisely how the performers’ feet moved to evoke a moresca. Nor do we know if Lopes had in mind the performances of mourisca he may have witnessed in Portugal, or if Pigafetta had in mind the performances of moresche he may have witnessed in Italy.³⁰ We also do not know if they meant dances within the moros y cristianos throughout Spain and the Americas in that time period. We do not know, further, if Lopes and Pigafetta applied moresca to danced movements and rhythms which others would have classified as similar to Afro-Iberian confraternities’ performances in southern Europe.³¹ In other words, neither Lopes nor Pigafetta clarify how they are deploying dancers’ bodies as historical sources of a performance event. Bodies, specifically bodies with African heritages, function as sources for facts and events in African American and African Diasporic performance narratives. For moments like this, we access bodies from past time periods through written records as preserved in archives.

²⁹ Trouillot, *Silencing the Past*, 50.

³⁰ H. Livermore, *The Festivities of December 1552 in Lisbon* (Coimbra: Coimbra Editoria, 1984) 321; Katherine Tucker McGinnis, “Moving in High Circles; Courts, Dance, and Dancing Masters in Italy in the Long Sixteenth Century,” (PhD diss., University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, 2001) 153-154, 163, 172-174, 176, 178, 188-189, 198.

³¹ Jeroen DeWulf, “Black Brotherhoods in North America: Afro-Iberian and West-Central African Influences,” in *African Studies Quarterly* 15:3 (June 2015): 19-38.

Trouillot further distinguishes between “the moment of fact retrieval (the making of *narratives*); and the moment of retrospective significance (the making of *history* in the final instance).”³² Narratives precede history, in that historical narratives do not always already convey credible legitimacy. Using Lopes as a source for West Central Africa in the late sixteenth century may help form a narrative about what happened in West Central Africa, but this narrative will not automatically qualify as history. To be accepted as a part of history, as a part of the process formulating and legitimating the facts and events significant enough to be remembered, a narrative needs to establish “authority, continuity, depth, and interdependence” for the facts deployed.³³ In other words, “facts are never meaningless; they become facts only because they matter in some sense” and facts “will have to gain their right to existence in light of the field constituted by previously created facts.”³⁴ The dancing recorded by Lopes and Pigafetta *can* enter as a fact *if* it relates to “previously created facts” about the Kongo kingdom and southern Europe in this time period, as well as the wider field of African Diasporic performance.

Lopes and Pigafetta’s report has been qualified with “authority, continuity, depth, and interdependence” in relation to political and geographic histories of Early Modern Europe and West Central Africa. Cécile Fromont, for instance, cites Lopes and Pigafetta as evidence of ongoing European Catholic interest in and competition for trade with the Kongo kingdom.³⁵ John Thornton and Andrea Mosterman also draw on Lopes and Pigafetta when writing about Kongo-Portuguese

³² Trouillot, *Silencing the Past*, 25.

³³ Trouillot, *Silencing the Past*, 8.

³⁴ Trouillot, *Silencing the Past*, 29, 49.

³⁵ Fromont, *The Art of Conversion: Christian Visual Culture in the Kingdom of Kongo* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2014) 157.

conflicts.³⁶ In the late sixteenth and early seventeenth century, Francesc Relaño notes, “Through Pigafetta’s edition,” their report “gained a reputation as the first account devoted specifically to the Kingdom of Congo.”³⁷ Moreover, Filippo Pigafetta has also been qualified as a source within Renaissance Italian theatre history. His letters give us a primary source on the opening performance of Orsato Guistiniani’s *El Edipo il tiranno* (*Oedipus the King*) at the Teatro Olimpico in Vicenza.³⁸

So, while scholars in other fields draw on Lopes and Pigafetta as a source for geography and politics in history, and while Pigafetta has been qualified as a source on Italian theatre, the report’s observations on Kongo dance performance do not qualify as facts or events relevant to narratives of sub-Saharan influence in global performance, including dance and theatre. Moreover, the dancing bodies they make present do not qualify as sources for narrating sub-Saharan influences in global performance. Is it because Lopes and Pigafetta appear to be transposing a pan-European practice, alternately located within moresche, moros y cristianos, mourisca, moresque, or morris, into West Central African locations? Is it because we cannot imagine how to map a West Central African moresche into ritual or plantation performance practices throughout the Americas? Is it because imagining West Central Africans dancing moresche formations contradicts and upsets ideas of longstanding sub-Saharan *isolation* and *difference* from Europe?

³⁶ Thornton and Mosterman, “A Re-Interpretation of the Kongo-Portuguese War of 1622 According to New Documentary Evidence,” in *Journal of African History* L1 (2010): 235-248.

³⁷ Francesc Relaño, “Against Ptolemy: The Significance of the Lopes-Pigafetta Map of Africa,” in *Imago Mundi* 47 (1995): 49 (49-66).

³⁸ See Salvatore di Maria, “Italian Reception of Greek Tragedy,” in *A Companion to Greek Tragedy*, ed. Justina Gregory, 428-443 (Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing, 2008) 443, fn 2; and Anna Migliarisi, “Staging Ritual all’Italiana: *Edipo Tiranno* at Vicenza (1585),” in *Italica* 90.4 (Winter 2013) 532, 534, 536, 539, 540, 545 (532-547).

My first question here entails examining how we already know what *moresca* means and where it comes from, or belongs, in terms of European geographies. My second question considers the relationship of sub-Saharan and American dances in historical narratives. My third question challenges how we understand sub-Saharan territories as isolated from European developments of both theatre and dance. I remain troubled by the explicit timeline of developmental delay, wherein Europeans, after nearly two thousand years developing *theatre*, then *bestow* scripted theatre to Africans on the continent and to African-descended persons in the Americas. Implicit within all of these questions is an assessment of how historical narratives qualify imagined bodies to carry and transmit knowledge from *somewhere* in an earlier time period and then to *some place else* in the known future. I am using the frame of imagined bodies, because of how historical narratives write in or compose bodies through time and space. When we *read* of bodies, whether identified as people or cargo or laborers within the source itself, we do not *see* the body on the page. We see words meant to evoke and narrate day to day interactions which ended up making history. Historical narratives ask us to enter into historical worlds, to imagine specific times and locations populated with bodies and places and buildings and events or happenings.

Moving forward along with Trouillot, I treat history as a process of producing narratives, or a philosophical practice of generating meaningful sequences of past events and persons, times and places. The process of history gives us narratives comprising historical worlds, descriptive and plotted accounts entailing choices of who belongs where and with whom, in which time periods and locations. I pluralize *worlds* quite deliberately, to evoke a dramaturgical conceptualization of multiple worlds with specific sets of guiding rules and knowledges.³⁹ Each historical narrative gives us a world

³⁹ Elinor Fuchs, “EF’s Visit to a Small Planet: Questions to Ask a Play,” in *The Routledge Companion to Dramaturgy*, ed. Magda Romanska, 403-407. (Abingdon, Oxon: Routledge, 2015).

in which some people are present, others are absent, some events are important, and others are insignificant. Examining the rules of the world within a historical narrative gives us an opportunity to understand and challenge how history works, how choices made from the moment(s) of source creation to the moment(s) of historical legitimacy influence what we know and how we know. Or as Trouillot phrases it, examining how history works as a process enables us to work through “what happened” and “that which is said to have happened,” in terms of bodies made present and bodies made absent.⁴⁰

To rephrase the previous questions, accordingly: has this Kongo court performance been silenced because Lopes and Pigafetta appear to be transposing a European dance practice onto West Central Africans as imagined Black dancing bodies? Has it been disqualified because we cannot conceive of West Central Africans as imagined Black dancing bodies carrying and transmitting embodied knowledge, or repertoires similar to those of the *moresca*, from Africa to the Americas? Has it been made absent because imagining West Central African dancers as Black dancing bodies within *moresca* formations contradicts and upsets ideas of sub-Saharan bodies as utterly isolated and different from imagined European bodies? Before we address these questions in full in chapter 1, I will detail the implicit choices we must make to arrange or interrogate how imagined Black dancing bodies belong in archived and narrated historical worlds.

Notice, in the previous paragraph, how I moved between a geographic belonging, West Central Africans or West Central African dancers, and an imagined embodied belonging, Black dancing bodies. I do so, to call attention to the process of narrating bodies as historical sources for dance histories. Again, when Lopes and Pigafetta write of the Kongo court, we do not *see* West Central Africans or dancers on the page. Lopes and Pigafetta are asking their readers to imagine

⁴⁰ Trouillot, *Silencing the Past*, 2-3.

dancing bodies, in motion and in physical appearance as related to geographic or territorial location. Some of the tension in treating this source as evidence of a performance event comes from the imagining of Black dancing bodies with West Central African heritages and the description of their dancing as similar to a *moresca*. More specifically, the tension arises from the imagining of Black dancing bodies, as located within and from sub-Saharan regions, being capable of dancing in a style comparable to a practice *now* known and analyzed as European.

The Black dancing body entails a particular kind of imaginative process. Harvey Young explains, “an *idea* of the black body has been and continues to be projected across actual physical bodies; it chronicles how the misrecognition of individuated bodies as “the black body” creates similar experiences.”⁴¹ The Black body invokes misperception of sameness, even as it enables Young to argue that, “the similarities in how [black bodies] are seen and see themselves constitute a relatable experience of the body.”⁴² Young works through misrecognition, in order to reveal how blackness permeates and categorizes lived experiences, or how a “field of power” manifests within everyday interactions and experiences. Young further points out the challenges in using *body*, which can evoke a physical actuality, or empirical fact, of blackness. As Hortense Spillers argues, “I would contend that the body is neither *given* as an uncomplicated empirical rupture on the landscape of the human, nor do we ever actually “see” it.”⁴³ *Body* does not just evoke human. *Body* can evoke bodies of land or bodies of water, a legislative body or a royal body. Bodies are imagined and forged based on relating *likeness*, even if that likeness becomes apparent through practices of misperception.

⁴¹ Young, *Embodying Black Experience*, 4.

⁴² Young, *Embodying Black Experience*, 14, cf 7.

⁴³ Hortense Spillers, “Introduction: Peter’s Pans: Eating in the Diaspora,” in *Black, White, and in Color: Essays on American Literature*, 1-64 (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2003) 21.

In Early Modern histories, Black bodies stand in for sub-Saharan peoples and their exiled descendants, dispossessed and coerced into enslavement. The imagined and Black dancing body facilitates analyses of related movements and rhythms categorized as coming from and moving away from sub-Saharan territories. As an imagined dancing body, the Black body evokes misperception *in motion*, whereby individually- or regionally-executed steps and rhythms became sub-Saharan similarities or commonalities spread throughout the world. The stakes of claiming, through the imagined Black dancing body, sub-Saharan knowledge worthy of belonging in history, remain high. On the one hand, positioning bodies with sub-Saharan heritages as sources of embodied knowledges with which historical narratives can be composed, undercuts and intervenes in written archives of ledgers and trial transcripts, minstrel shows and plantation diaries. On the other hand, narrating histories with imagined Black dancing bodies can reconstitute the blood and bone of racialized imaginaries comprised of physical misrecognition.

Going further, I take Black as a process of negation within historical production of narratives. That is, another reason I am choosing to use imagined Black dancing bodies is because of the systematic displacement of dancing bodies with sub-Saharan heritages from developing dance practices outside of ritual, social, and minstrel belonging. Imagined Black dancing bodies evoke sub-Saharan Africa as a region of repeated and excessive displacement. Not only were millions of people dispossessed and displaced into enslavement and exile, sub-Saharan Africa itself has been repeatedly excluded from qualifying as a location *where history happens*. Put another way, imagined Black dancing bodies *belong* within histories of global performance by virtue of being *displaced* or silenced as sources of embodied knowledges. It is not until the twentieth century when scholars like Carter G. Woodson and Katherine Dunham qualify imagined Black bodies, dancing and otherwise, as sources for sub-Saharan histories. Black thus entails a reclamation of sub-Saharan bodies through displacement, a staking of historiographic belonging based in and through silence and absence.

In the rest of the Introduction, I analyze how Trouillot's process enables me to expose and question the layered philosophical parameters of Black dance histories. I work through and analyze the relationship of anthropological methodologies to historical narratives of Black performance in trans-Atlantic circulation. These methodologies cross over disciplinary boundaries, to encompass work by Atlantic historians and Performance Studies scholars. I also place Trouillot in conversation with Thomas Postlewait on theatre historiography, in order to identify why and how I use Trouillot to relate Black dance within theatre histories. I then negotiate the overarching ontologies of being influencing my project, that is, how to name and claim the disciplinary and geographic homes into which I will arrange my history of a history. Finally, I explore the philosophical relationships relevant to my usage of Africa, sub-Saharan Africa, Europe, and Blackness.

Belonging and displacement pervade my journey throughout this introduction and the dissertation. I am considering the extent of belonging allowed to imagined Black dancing bodies, in that I am deliberating on the multiple strategies of displacement and silencing enforced in containing imagined Black dancing bodies within certain time periods, locations, and danced rhythms and movements. I undertake this, in order to hopefully arrive at ways of reconfiguring how we write sub-Saharan influences into global circulation. By working under and through this "bundle of silences" related to imagined Black dancing bodies in historical narratives, I am engaging strategies of fugitivity. For fugitivity here, I have Keguro Macharia's formulation in mind, "Fugitivity is seeing around corners, stockpiling in crevices, knowing the un-rules, being unruly, because the rules are never enough, and not even close."⁴⁴

⁴⁴ Macharia, "fugitivity."

Exposing interrelated silences, from source creation to historiographic legitimation, may allow me “To sneak in and around, about and away, to crevice and burrow: to jump under fences.”⁴⁵ In order to arrive at “the rules are never enough,” first we must engage and work through the historiographic parameters binding sub-Saharan-descended dancers into ritual, social, and minstrel belonging. I begin, then, by debating the overarching ontologies of being and parameters for territorial and temporal kinships. And I remember Shailja Patel’s words, “Because ready / is never a question just a reminder / to breathe / and jump.”⁴⁶

METAPHYSICAL CHOICES OF BELONGING

*This is a story within a story—so slippery at the edges that one wonders when and where it started and whether it will ever end.*⁴⁷

Inquiring into the process of producing a historical narrative, with its attendant absences and silences, is fundamentally a historiographic investigation of practice. Historiography gives us a history of a history, or how the produced narrative came to choose who lived when and who lived where, who caused what, and what happened and why. Put differently, history, through an accrual of legitimated narratives, can relay knowledge about events that took place, who participated in them, and why we care about those events, times, and places. Analyzing historical narratives within the “fundamentally processual character of historical production” can also tell us *how* those events and people, times and places, became significant enough to be legitimated and mentioned knowledge

⁴⁵ Macharia, “fugitivity.”

⁴⁶ Patel, *Migritude*, 124.

⁴⁷ Trouillot, *Silencing the Past*, 1.

about the past.⁴⁸ Trouillot's four-part process allows us to elaborate on how we know what we know: from the moment of writing *what happened* to the archival preservation of the written report, as well as to the recollection of an archived document *within* a narrative and to the moment of legitimating that narrative as constituting history.

In other words, history is not just “what happened” but also “that which is said to have happened,” and “the boundary between the two meanings is often quite fluid.”⁴⁹ Moreover, since “mentions and silences are ... active, dialectical counterparts of which history is the synthesis,” analyzing the “processual character of historical production” also tells us how certain events and people, times and places, became insignificant enough to be silenced and illegitimated knowledge about the past.⁵⁰ Scholars of anthropology and history draw on Trouillot frequently, whether for his insights into the unimaginable events of the Haitian Revolution, or for his insights into the dynamics of coloniality and power in formulating archives to support nation-state narratives, and suppress or erase subaltern communities.⁵¹

I am using Trouillot's framework, here, to interrogate received and legitimated histories of sub-Saharan-influenced performance practices as percussive and polyrhythmic steps and gestures, and earth-based or fluid execution. With Trouillot's process, I am able to reveal part of *how* we came to know sub-Saharan influence as being comprised of these collective practices, and also *how* we came to trace sub-Saharan influences primarily through narratives of plantation performance and blackface minstrelsy. Based on these related goals, I am concerned with the implied presence of

⁴⁸ Trouillot, *Silencing the Past*, 28.

⁴⁹ Trouillot, *Silencing the Past*, 15, 3.

⁵⁰ Trouillot, *Silencing the Past*, 48, 28.

⁵¹ For example, see Walter Mignolo, *Local Histories/Global Designs: Coloniality, Subaltern Knowledges, and Border Thinking* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2012) 16, 22, 30, 62, 319, 321, 324-325.

imagined and Black dancing bodies carrying and transmitting knowledge, from their sub-Saharan homelands, out into trans-Atlantic worlds. I am analyzing how imagined and Black dancing bodies, as written down and documented and preserved, over time, serve as embodied sources of historical knowledge about sub-Saharan practices.

I introduced the previous section with a question on how to write a historical narrative in African American theatre. I also introduced a historiographic kinship between Black dance history, as inextricable from trans-Atlantic slavery, and blackface minstrelsy, as taking and enacting a semblance of Black dance practices from within plantation slavery. This dissertation, then, is as much a deliberation on theatre history and historiography, as it is a methodological challenge to Black dance history, as situated within trans-Atlantic historiography. To be quite clear, I have claimed historiographic parameters across several disciplines: theatre and performance, from the humanities, and history and anthropology, from the social sciences. I have explained the dissertation's goals as a history of a history, or an elaboration on the philosophical process of writing history. I have described Black dance as having established historical narratives. I have also invoked the imagined and Black dancing body from Performance Studies scholar Harvey Young. Since the dissertation is a history of a history of Black dance, I am situating the imagined Black dancing body as a historical source to examine and analyze. I have related the imagined Black dancing body to both embodied memory and embodied knowledge, further concepts from Performance Studies, which I will elaborate on at a later point.

Both Black dance history and Performance Studies have close relationships to the anthropological discipline. Lynn Fauley Emery wrote the first historical narrative on Black dance with the assistance of Katherine Dunham. Dunham's anthropological field work in the Caribbean provided the evidence on dance for Melville Herskovits's seminal book, *The Myth of the Negro Past*. Based on his time under Franz Boas, Herskovits formulated his methodological analysis through

historical anthropology, or anthropology as a means of recovering historical data preserved in primitive and semi-primitive people groups.⁵² Herskovits's framework relied on conceiving primitivity in isolation from civilized modernity, or Western progress, but he legitimated the exploration and analysis of sub-Saharan histories in trans-Atlantic circulation.⁵³ A later anthropologist, Victor Turner, theorized two related conceptual frameworks, which would become significant for scholars who analyzed African influences within African American performance: social dramas and the role of rites of passage within social dramas. Because of the significance of ritual and performance in historical narratives about African influence in African American performance, I focus here on Turner's ritual process.

Most of Turner's theories came from his initial field work with the Ndembu people group in southern central Africa. He developed "his processual view on ritual" from the work of Arnold van Gennep, and theorized the pervasive significance of liminality and *communitas*.⁵⁴ Van Gennep's three-step process, in rites of passage, entailed separation, liminality, and re-integration into a new status within the collective group or culture. The first stage, "separation, or the pre-liminal" means "when a person or group becomes detached ... from an earlier set of social conditions."⁵⁵ After this follows liminality, "when the state of the ritual subject is ambiguous; he is no longer in the old state

⁵² Herskovits specifically examined people groups located in contact zones, or what would later be termed frontier zones, to ascertain what (non-Western) cultural practices they retained and what (Western) cultural practices they adopted; *The Myth of the Negro Past* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1958) 9-15.

⁵³ I use legitimated very carefully here, since Herskovits was in turn preceeded by both W. E. B. Du Bois and Carter G. Woodson, but Herskovits remains the scholar whose work is more widely cited as seminal or foundational.

⁵⁴ Mathieu Deflem, "Ritual, Anti-Structure, and Religion: A Discussion of Victor Turner's Processual Symbolic Analysis," in *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion* 30:1 (1991): 7 (1-25).

⁵⁵ Deflem, "Ritual, Anti-Structure, and Religion," 7-8.

and has not yet reached the new one.”⁵⁶ Finally, in the “post-liminal” state, “the ritual subject enters a new stable state with its own rights and obligations.”⁵⁷ Turner divided rituals into two categories: life-status or life-crisis rituals (eg., a ritual change into manhood, or a funeral rite) and rituals of affliction (eg., a ritual cleansing from a trial or trouble). In the liminal stage, Turner theorized the participants as simultaneously “no longer” what they were and “not yet” arrived at what they would be. They are “disguised or hidden: they are considered neither male nor female, deprived of rank, status and property.”⁵⁸

Moreover, during this liminal phase, participants “are all treated equally and are subjected to the rest of the community.”⁵⁹ In liminality, because participants are all outside of social structures, they develop *communitas*: “a feeling of comradeship,” a “generic bond and sentiment ... between them.”⁶⁰ The process of undergoing a ritual thus creates a common and temporary feeling of community among participants. Moreover, even as a ritual separates the participants from their wider social structures, the purpose of the ritual is to bring the participants back into the social and cultural norms. In rituals of affliction, the process may re-instate or re-integrate a person or group of people. In life-status changes, the ritual process is designed to elevate a person or group of people as they re-enter social and cultural structures. Overall, for Turner, *communitas* operates across social hierarchies and structures, providing an ongoing and dialectic counterpoint to “the main principles

⁵⁶ Deflem, “Ritual, Anti-Structure, and Religion,” 8.

⁵⁷ Deflem, “Ritual, Anti-Structure, and Religion,” 8.

⁵⁸ Deflem, “Ritual, Anti-Structure, and Religion,” 13.

⁵⁹ Deflem, “Ritual, Anti-Structure, and Religion,” 13-14.

⁶⁰ Deflem, “Ritual, Anti-Structure, and Religion,” 14-15.

of social order.”⁶¹ That is, under the license of liminal *communitas*, participants are allowed to invert and critique structural norms, even as they intend to return and be reinstated into those same norms.

Rituals, then, form and reform social cohesion through commemorating status changes and healing illnesses or suffering. Turner theorized the liminal in near exclusive relation to primitive or tribal social structures. For industrialized cultures, Turner created the concept of liminoid. Under liminoid, Turner categorized “the quasi-liminal character of cultural performances (eg., theatre plays, music concerts, art exhibitions) and leisure activities.”⁶² Participating in or attending plays, museum exhibits, and sports contests enables performers and spectators to engage in a temporary collective, a *communitas* akin to that formed in primitive ritual liminality. Furthermore, for Turner and his pervasive influence in Performance Studies, liminoid sites of cultural performance “often challenge the wider social structure by offering social critique on, or even suggestions for, a revolutionary re-ordering of the official social order.”⁶³ Again, here we see Turner’s focus on processes of social change. He theorized cultural performances as sites to model social critique and change, in that they generate a kind of *communitas* useful for inspiring collective action against “the official social order.”

Since Turner’s work, and his extensive collaboration with Richard Schechner, scholars of Performance Studies have critiqued and qualified Turner’s initial claims on social change through *communitas*. Diana Taylor, for instance, notes that Turner’s anthropological lens, “reveals his ... desires and interests” as a spectator or observer, rather than revealing how or why rituals actually

⁶¹ Deflem, “Ritual, Anti-Structure, and Religion,” 16.

⁶² Deflem, “Ritual, Anti-Structure, and Religion,” 16.

⁶³ Deflem, “Ritual, Anti-Structure, and Religion,” 16.

happened.⁶⁴ Taylor continues, “Moreover, his position as an ‘objective’ observer looking down on the ‘object’ of analysis sets up the unequal, and distorting perspective” of Western power over the Other.⁶⁵ I concur with Taylor, in that Turner’s parameters for both social drama and liminal/liminoid may reveal less about *what happened* as opposed to revealing *how* Turner explained what he saw happen. Anthropological methodologies, as based on Turner’s rites of passage, stand as Trouillot’s category of “that which is said to have happened.” Because of the contested and volatile boundary between what happened and that which is said to have happened, however, processual rites of passage also offer insight into how anthropology underpins a great deal of scholarship about sub-Saharan performance. Turner’s liminal phase allows us some insight into the parameters of historical narratives focused on sub-Saharan performers and their embodied memories and knowledges.

Specifically, we see ideas of liminal status pervading Atlantic historical narratives of slavery and performance. By alluding to Atlantic history, I am referring to the wide body of scholarship which analyzes “the emergence in the fifteenth century and the subsequent growth of the Atlantic basin as a site for demographic, economic, social, cultural, and other forms of exchange among and within the four continents surrounding the Atlantic.”⁶⁶ As a trans-oceanic formation, Atlantic history enables questions of change in a time period of significant upheaval, in social relations and labor formations. Of enslaved communities in North America, Philip D. Morgan writes, “The slave trade irrevocably severed numerous social bonds that had tied Africans together. Unable to transport their

⁶⁴ Diana Taylor, *The Archive and the Repertoire: Performing Cultural Memory in the Americas* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2003) 9.

⁶⁵ Taylor, *The Archive and the Repertoire*, 9.

⁶⁶ Philip D. Morgan and Jack P. Greene, “Introduction: The Present State of Atlantic History,” in *Atlantic History: A Critical Appraisal*, eds. Jack P. Greene and Philip D. Morgan, 3-33 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009) 3.

institutions, slaves were forced to rebuild a society in the New World.”⁶⁷ The extent of loss, Morgan further observes, is due to the trauma of trans-Atlantic travel, in that “The Middle Passage exacted a harrowing toll on bodies and minds.”⁶⁸ Scholars of Black dance use similar language, describing the Middle Passage as horror and terror, as the initial crucible forging what would become African American culture. Paul Gilroy, who theorized the Black Atlantic as a site of countercultural production, chose the slave ship as his primary image for networking discontinuous but related sites of cultural production.⁶⁹ Because of the physical and psychological trauma inflicted in forcibly removing sub-Saharanans from their homelands and onto a trans-oceanic captive journey, Sterling Stuckey concludes, “no matter how true to traditional dance forms a particular African dance was, a new history of dance had begun.”⁷⁰

The Middle Passage stands as the forced liminal status, the non-national belonging from which the descendants of coerced and exiled sub-Saharanans can never quite escape. And indeed, when the Middle Passage lies configured as a traumatic liminal crisis, narratives like Genovese’s *Roll, Jordan Roll*, Patrick Manning’s *The African Diaspora*, and Philip D. Morgan’s *Slave Counterpoint*, write towards freedom as a resolution of this crisis. Or, as Michelle Wright notes, a Middle Passage epistemology connects “our cultural practices and expansions, our politics and social sensibilities, to the historical experience of slavery in the Americas and the struggle to achieve full human suffrage

⁶⁷ Philip D. Morgan, *Slave Counterpoint: Black Culture in the Eighteenth-Century Chesapeake and Low-Country* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1998) 442.

⁶⁸ Morgan, *Slave Counterpoint*, 443; see also Stephanie E. Smallwood, *Saltwater Slavery: A Middle Passage from Africa to American Diaspora* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2007) 33-64, 101-121.

⁶⁹ Paul Gilroy, *The Black Atlantic: Modernity and Double Consciousness* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1993) 17.

⁷⁰ Sterling Stuckey, “Christian Conversion and Dance,” in *Dancing Many Drums*, 40.

in the West.”⁷¹ Brought into trans-Atlantic exchanges under coercion and enslavement, sub-Saharan–descended persons begin as always already liminal, and only intended for coerced and labored belonging in trans-Atlantic exchanges. Put differently, sub-Saharan Africa ends in the Middle Passage, and enslaved persons must, in the journey and afterward, attempt to negotiate towards or away from the coerced and commodified belonging intended by trans-oceanic markets of death and labor. We will return to this in the sections to follow, but for now I want us to keep in mind how anthropological methodologies pervade and underpin the philosophical choices we make to write historical narratives of sub-Saharan exiles and their influences on danced knowledge.

Turner’s concepts, specifically those of liminal and liminoid, have further influenced a wide range of scholarly analysis on the roles of ritual and resistance. Some Atlantic historians, like Peter Linebaugh and Marcus Rediker, formulate violent uprisings through a form of *communitas*. In *The Many-Headed Hydra: Sailors, Slaves, Commoners and the Hidden History of the Revolutionary Atlantic*, for instance, Linebaugh and Rediker reveal how the oppressive conditions enforced on sailors and enslaved captives inspired them to work together against captains and investors.⁷² Scholarship like this wields trans-Atlantic networks as an opportunity for a *communitas* across racial and socioeconomic belonging in the face of related oppression. Historians who tie ritual remembrance more explicitly into Atlantic worlds include *Ritual and Resistance: African Atlantic Religion in Kongo and the Lowcountry South in the Era of Slavery* by Jason R. Young; *Recreating Africa: Culture, Kinship, and Religion in the African-Portuguese World, 1441-1770* by James Hoke Sweet; and *Manipulating the Sacred:*

⁷¹ Michelle M. Wright, *Physics of Blackness: Beyond the Middle Passage Epistemology* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press) 7.

⁷² Peter Linebaugh and Marcus Rediker, *The Many-Headed Hydra: Slaves, Sailors, Commoners and the Hidden History of the Revolutionary Atlantic* (Boston: Beacon Press, Verso, 2001). In contrast, see Smallwood, *Saltwater Slavery*, 101: “the slave cargo was the antithesis of community.”

Yoruba Art, Ritual, and Resistance in Brazilian Candomblé by Mikelle Smith Omari-Tunkara. In Black dance scholarship, the relationship between ritual and resistance features prominently in work like *Ring Shout, Wheel About: The Racial Politics of Music and Dance in North American Slavery* by Katrina Dyonne Thompson and *Jookin': The Rise of Social Dance Formations in African-American Culture* by Katrina Hazzard-Gordon. For all of these scholars, they focus not only on *what happens* in ritual as a performance, but *how* that ritual performance enables participants to both remember and forge new collective memories of sub-Saharan homelands. Enslaved persons with sub-Saharan heritages thus wield cultural performance, including ritual and dance, to resist the dehumanizing oppression of coerced dispersal and slavery.

Turner's concepts have also influenced a wide range of scholarly analyses on performance and identity, in both Atlantic history and Performance Studies, such as *Exchanging Our Country Marks: The Transformation of African Identities in the Colonial and Antebellum South* by Michael A. Gomez; *Modern Dance, Negro Dance: Race in Motion* by Susan Manning; and *Black Dance in London, 1730-1850: Innovation, Tradition, and Resistance* by Rodreguez King-Dorset. Both Gomez and King-Dorset examine how persons with sub-Saharan heritages, coerced across the Atlantic, wielded cultural performances (including rituals and dancing) to retain memory and shift their collective identity in relation to their forced, enslaved exile. Susan Manning takes up dance performance in the early twentieth century US. She analyzes how dance performance encouraged spectators to negotiate their own identity, and perhaps "catch glimpses of subjectivities from social locations that differ from their own, a process termed cross-viewing."⁷³ In moments of cross-viewing, spectators encounter and engage in social structures apart from their own experiences. For Manning, "Cross-viewing has

⁷³ Susan Manning, *Modern Dance, Negro Dance: Race in Motion* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2004)

the potential to alter how publics read bodies in motion and thus to effect social and artistic change.⁷⁴ For all of these scholars, performance changes how people relate to each other in lived experience. Their scholarly analyses and historical narratives seek to understand how these relational shifts happened, what they meant, and how they reflected or reconfigured the social structures of their time.

Anthropological methodologies, while structuring historical narratives through liminality, also enable scholars to now theorize how performance, through the body, furnishes or brings forth knowledge. Because of preceding anthropologists and Performance Studies scholars, for instance, Diana Taylor wields performance as evidence of cultural identity and memory, *through* the body. The body, in motion, relays or furnished knowledge of what came before and of what might lie ahead. In the moment of performance, bodies shape this knowledge, knowledge which is based in past experiences or embodied memories, and transmit it for an unknown but potentially anticipated future. Or, as Taylor notes, “Performances function as vital acts of transfer, transmitting social knowledge, memory, and a sense of identity.”⁷⁵ Performance, in other words, creates and forms culture, by bringing past or remembered practices into the shared present, and towards an imagined future. *But* can performance, as shared embodied memory, stand as credible and legitimated historical evidence? Can performance function as a way – a method, a route – through which to know what happened in cultures or people groups, just as much as written or textual documents provide evidence through which to know theatrical or historical events?

The tension between performance, as furnishing or bringing forth evidence of historical knowledge, and written sources as providing evidence of historical knowledge, led Taylor to

⁷⁴ Susan Manning, *Modern Dance, Negro Dance*, xvi.

⁷⁵ Taylor, *The Archive and The Repertoire*, 2.

conceive of the *archive* in relationship to the *repertoire*. The first chapter will detail the significance of embodied knowledge in historiography of imagined Black dancing bodies. For now, I want us to keep in mind that, in line with Performance Studies scholarship, Taylor's concept of repertoire, "enacts embodied memory."⁷⁶ Further, "Embodied and performed acts generate, record, and transmit knowledge."⁷⁷ Rhythms and steps, timing and gesture, bring knowledges of past movement into the present, onto the dance floor or the dancing ground, for possible transmission into the future and to other cultures or people groups. In circulation with – and sometimes in contrast to – the repertoire, Taylor writes: "Insofar as it constitutes materials that seem to endure, the archive exceeds the live."⁷⁸ If we take the archive to hold and categorize materials with longer lives than human bodies, then the archive offers the promise of accessible facts and events enduring through many generations and time periods. Taylor builds a particular kind of claim: the archive and its documents *seem* to withstand and resist the changes and risks inherent to everyday life; and the archive *seems* to exceed lived mortality. By destabilizing the archive, Taylor situates the repertoire as a legitimate site of enacted and embodied knowledge through which to know what happened. Put differently, Taylor configures the repertoire as *how* we know what happened.

This same tension, between embodied sources of knowledge and written sources of knowledge, led me to a different, but related theoretical paradigm: that of the process of producing imagined dancing bodies as embodied sources of historical knowledge. I am concerned with the process of getting to, or *knowing*, the repertoire through archived documents. *How* do we *know* which repertoires serve as embodied evidence of specific people groups, or local historical knowledge? How do *written* sources invoke and deploy imagined dancing bodies to create separate repertoires for

⁷⁶ Taylor, *The Archive and the Repertoire*, 20.

⁷⁷ Taylor, *The Archive and the Repertoire*, 21.

⁷⁸ Taylor, *The Archive and the Repertoire*, 19.

Black dance and *White* dance? This brings me back to Trouillot's "fundamentally processual character of historical production."⁷⁹ I am using Trouillot for my primary theoretical structure, who is wielded quite often in social science disciplinary contexts, such as *Making History in Banda: Anthropological Visions of Africa's Past* by Ann Brower Stahl and *Rethinking Modernity: Postcolonialism and the Sociological Imagination* by Gurinder K. Bhambra. Stahl draws on Trouillot, in order to keep "sight of the lived past," while also paying attention to "the social, cultural, and political-economic contexts in which knowledge about the past is produced and to the power dimensions of knowledge production."⁸⁰ Bhambra uses Trouillot to reveal how the identity category of Other, as written down, preserved, and wielded in narratives of the West, limits the range of permissible plausibility. That is, "surface changes in the explicit criteria of what is to be addressed do not necessarily alter the fields of significance within which disciplines operate."⁸¹ Adding to or augmenting imperial histories with subaltern voices does not necessarily undermine or overthrow the "wider narrative of [Western] global domination" as progress towards civilized modernity.⁸²

But, as far as I have found, Trouillot has not yet been cited or used in relation to *theatre* history, that is, either narratives of *what happened* in theatre, or narratives of *how* we know what happened in theatre. I am continuing to refer back to theatre, because as I will show in the next chapter, the historical philosophy of theatre prohibits and constrains persons with sub-Saharan heritages from influencing theatre until after blackface minstrelsy. Even then, African Americans are

⁷⁹ Trouillot, *Silencing the Past*, 28.

⁸⁰ Ann Brower Stahl, *Making History in Banda: Anthropological Visions of Africa's Past* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001) 8.

⁸¹ Gurinder K. Bhambra, *Rethinking Modernity: Postcolonialism and the Sociological Imagination* (Basingstoke, Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007) 21.

⁸² Bhambra, *Rethinking Modernity*, 9.

always already fighting to undo centuries of oppression within the confines of Western theatrical practice. Or, as Michelle Wright reminds us, are we always already moving towards “overcoming obstacles through struggle (or “uplift”)” in “a linear progress narrative or, when reversed (as in Afropessimism) a reverse linear narrative indicating that no *Black* progress has been made because of the continual oppression by white Western hegemonies?”⁸³ As I will detail in greater significance in chapter 1, these are the nearly impossible stakes we set when we originate African American contributions to theatre within blackface minstrelsy. These are the nearly impossible stakes we impose on the historical narratives we produce about African American theatre, even when we go back further to plantation dance, as do Lynne Fauley Emery, Katrina Hazzard-Gordon, and Katrina Dyonne Thompson. We are here to ascertain how these rules in theatre historiography came to be, and how Trouillot assists us in interrogating and delineating the limits, so that we might (might) be able to find methods to imagine *otherwise*.

Put differently, by placing Black dance history alongside the process of how we write African Americans into United States theatre history, I am querying the kinds of narratives *made possible* through the “fundamentally processual character of historical production,” particularly as it relates to historical narratives of theatre. In *The Cambridge Introduction to Theatre Historiography*, Thomas Postlewait illustrates some of the foundational tenets of writing theatre history. These foundational principles, or philosophical guidelines, emphasize the specific intervention I’m working towards with Trouillot. Postlewait observes that historians, “having *constructed* or *reconstructed* the events ... attempt to find ways to narrate – to describe, explain, and interpret – the basic conditions: *who, what, where*,

⁸³ Wright, *Physics of Blackness*, 8.

when, how, and why.”⁸⁴ This is similar to Trouillot: history is what happened. For Postlewait, historians aim to arrive at truths about what happened, who was there, when it happened, how it happened, and why. “The descriptive mandate of historical study is the recording of actions and events.”⁸⁵ Historians do this, in order to explain how and why events occurred as they did. So that, “the events, when set in relation to one another, provide a developmental order – perhaps contingent, perhaps causal – that may achieve some kind of narrative significance.”⁸⁶ But, as Postlewait cautions, when working with sources, with the goal of locating who, what, where, and when, historians must account for who created the source and how the source came into existence. Because an event, within sources, “resides ... in an actual and a potential state, paradoxically having been and yet to be.”⁸⁷

The creator of a written source, or even a material artifact, organizes what happened prior to the historian’s research, thus “the trace is simultaneously organized (already given shape by someone) and disorganized (not yet given meaning by the historian).”⁸⁸ Postlewait summarizes this tension as, “Any kind of historical source (verbal, visual, material) is a possible clue, but not necessarily a reliable piece of evidence.”⁸⁹ And for Postlewait, the historian’s task is to bring further primary and secondary sources to bear on each other, in order to ascertain credibility of documentation surrounding what happened, when and where it happened, and who was there.

⁸⁴ Thomas Postlewait, *The Cambridge Introduction to Theatre Historiography* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009) 21.

⁸⁵ Postlewait, *Introduction to Theatre Historiography*, 89.

⁸⁶ Postlewait, *Introduction to Theatre Historiography*, 89.

⁸⁷ Postlewait, *Introduction to Theatre Historiography*, 113.

⁸⁸ Postlewait, *Introduction to Theatre Historiography*, 113.

⁸⁹ Postlewait, *Introduction to Theatre Historiography*, 113.

Postlewait explains, “Although the full truth eludes us and total agreement is not possible, many partial truths can be attained, verified, and justified.”⁹⁰ All along, however, the historian must weigh evidence in relation to questioning, “What is *possible, plausible, probable*, and even *certain* in our search for the historical *truths* (always in the lower case, but still a matter of accurate and inaccurate, possible and impossible)?”⁹¹ Postlewait further states, “*What* we know is also constrained by *how* we know.”⁹² Again, we’ve seen this with Trouillot, in that the moment of source or fact creation influences archival preservation and narrative recollection. Postlewait notes, “historical inquiry is the pursuit of truths about the past within the conditions and constraints of possible knowledge.”⁹³ By possible knowledge, Postlewait acknowledges, “documented sources, in their many types, provide access to the event. They are fragments to be interpreted.”⁹⁴ Not only do sources hold fragmented access to what happened, “all sources or traces from the past are circumstantial. The trace itself, which designates an event, reveals an act of making, a complex interpretive process by someone who constituted the event for some purpose.”⁹⁵ Because of this Postlewait directs, a source, “i.e., something recorded, made, produced, or created by a human being” therefore “already carries an interpretive quality that we must decode as we attempt to look through the source to possible facts, which in turn could be used as evidence of the event itself.”⁹⁶

⁹⁰ Postlewait, *Introduction to Theatre Historiography*, 23.

⁹¹ Postlewait, *Introduction to Theatre Historiography*, 21-22.

⁹² Postlewait, *Introduction to Theatre Historiography*, 21.

⁹³ Postlewait, *Introduction to Theatre Historiography*, 23.

⁹⁴ Postlewait, *Introduction to Theatre Historiography*, 102.

⁹⁵ Postlewait, *Introduction to Theatre Historiography*, 113.

⁹⁶ Postlewait, *Introduction to Theatre Historiography*, 113.

But *how* does a trace become evidence of an event? How does a source's version of *what happened* qualify as credible and reliable facts of what, where, when, and who? To return to our Lopes and Pigafetta example, no other European-language sources use the word *moresca* or *Moresco* to describe a dance performance observed in West or West Central Africa. Since this source has been left out, repeatedly, historians have either missed it or disregarded it as unreliable, as non-evidence, and thus the performance as a non-event. In historical narratives, as versions of how we know what happened, this Kongo *moresca* *did not happen*. The limits of possible knowledge affect and restrict *why* an event happened and *who* caused what happened. If this Kongo *moresca* did not happen, in that historians have repeatedly disqualified this trace as credible, factual evidence, then Kongolese dancers did not know how to dance like a *moresca*. Kongolese dancers did not cause a dance performance, which may have resembled movements and rhythms in European courts, to happen. If this Kongo *moresca* did not happen, then Kongolese dancers did not learn movements and rhythms from European nobility.

Moreover, if this Kongo *moresca* did not happen, then Kongolese dancers did not influence the movements and rhythms executed by European nobility in West Central Africa and in European courts. Disqualifying a source, categorizing a trace as non-credible and unreliable, as non-evidence and non-factual, thereby reduces our capability for creating causality. Kongolese dancers thus do not belong in any part of a historical narrative, whether as acquiring or transmitting danced knowledge, whereby the *moresca* influences and contributes directly to development of European court ballet and theatrical performances.

Trouillot's elaboration of the historical process facilitates a questioning of how a source has become qualified, that is, how its traces have become qualified as facts and evidence, and its versions qualified as events. Here, then, we are concerned with how certain imagined dancing bodies have become qualified or disqualified from serving as sources, or embodied evidence, of facts and events.

In turn, Trouillot's framework also enables us to question the facts and events which the historical process *allows* to move into evidence of what happened. Again, with Trouillot, I am questioning which imagined dancing bodies the historical process has *allowed* to serve as sources of particular *kinds* of danced movements and rhythms. In relation to persons with sub-Saharan heritages, I also use Trouillot to reveal the systematic and pervasive silencing of sub-Saharan bodies from humanity. Even more specifically, I draw on Trouillot's process to expose the ongoing displacement, within written sources, of sub-Saharan danced movements and rhythms from qualifying as evidence of human movement.

Because as Postlewait claims, "the historian provides a representation of human actions," in that, "Anything done or observed by human beings is potentially an event for the historian."⁹⁷ Trouillot concurs, "Human beings participate in history both as actors and narrators."⁹⁸ Humans, as agents, have the potential to make things happen and to record a version of what happened. Humans tell historians what happened, and also serve as sources for that which is said to have happened. *But what if the imagined dancing bodies in question do not qualify as human?* Then they would have no movements and rhythms worthy of qualifying for documentation, preservation, and narration as a part of legitimated *human* history, where legitimated history is always already the descriptive record of what happened with, to, for, by, and according to humans. Given this, how do we then name and locate both the Kongolese performers and the historical worlds into which they may or may not belong?

⁹⁷ Postlewait, *Introduction to Theatre Historiography*, 89, 107; see also 98, 104, 105.

⁹⁸ Trouillot, *Silencing the Past*, 2.

IMPLIED GEOGRAPHIC AND TEMPORAL BELONGING

Throughout this section, I am interrogating the limits of kinship I will set up by claiming a specific disciplinary and geographic home for the sources I explore within the dissertation. In Trouillot's process of historical production, I am debating the ontological parameters, the implicit rules of arrangement, which influence how I am able to arrange sources or shift belonging. That is, since "sources occupy competing positions in the historical landscape," I am first negotiating the territorial and temporal range of my historical landscape in the dissertation.⁹⁹ History is a process of producing narratives, and history is also a process of producing belonging. By continuing to interrogate the implications of spatial and temporal belonging, we will discover how a "differential exercise of power" pre-emptively silences and disqualifies events like the Kongo court performance from African American theatre narratives.

I chose the Lopes and Pigafetta example because of its location and time period in relation to narratives of African American theatre and dance. African American theatre implies US location and belonging. At the end of the sixteenth century, St. Augustine was still the only permanent settlement in North America, or the regions which will eventually be known as the United States of America. But in 1619, Dutch privateers attacked a fleet of Portuguese ships en route from Luanda to the Caribbean. The *São João Bautista* suffered losses to their cargos of enslaved laborers. The Dutch privateer wound up in Jamestown, the first permanent English settlement in North America, and sold "20. and odd Negroes" as recorded by John Rolfe.¹⁰⁰ These enslaved West Central Africans disembarked in the colony of Virginia, and as Evie Shockley writes:

⁹⁹ Trouillot, *Silencing the Past*, 49-50.

¹⁰⁰ Qotd in Engel Sluiter, "New Light on the "20. and Odd Negroes" Arriving in Virginia, August 1619," in *William & Mary Quarterly*, Third Series, 54:2 (Apr 1997): 395-398.

soon shedding
servitude. soon reaping
talents sown on african soil.
after indenture, christians,
colonists. not english, but
not yet not-white.¹⁰¹

If Lopes and Pigafetta belong as a source for this Kongo performance event, then the West Central Africans sold to John Rolfe *may* have arrived knowing or having witnessed dances comparable to the moresca, or the morris, for the Virginian colonists.¹⁰² The first embodied knowledges brought by enslaved sub-Saharan Africans to North American regions *may* have included the moresca. But would the moresca then qualify as knowledge of *Black* dance? What are the implications of my implicit parameters for geographic and temporal belonging so far?

If I continue choosing *African American* for my project's home across theatre and performance, I call up ontologies of *being* a US American with sub-Saharan African heritages, such as Jesse Jackson's Rainbow Coalition.¹⁰³ And yes, I realize the tedious nature of first writing "US," as opposed to using just "American" in shorthand. I'm exploring unstated implications in claiming physical and temporal existences. At the moment, it seems necessary. For instance, by considering

¹⁰¹ Evie Shockley, "Waiting on the Mayflower," in Poetry Foundation, accessed July 7, 2016, <http://www.poetryfoundation.org/poem/244794>.

¹⁰² Cf also Thornton, "The African Experience of the '20. and Odd Negroes' Arriving in Virginia in 1619," 422 (421-434); "It is quite possible ... there were those who spoke the Kikongo language and were enslaved in Kongo's province of Nsundi or the land lying just beyond Kongo's eastern frontier."

¹⁰³ Thomas F. DeFrantz, "African American Dance: A Complex History," in *Dancing Many Drums*, 3-35; E. Patrick Johnson, *Appropriating Blackness: Performance and the Politics of Authenticity* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2003) 4.

African American as a claim on belonging in the US, I land in debates over who qualifies to bear the double descriptor. Can comparatively recent (continental) African immigrants whose ancestors did not cross or die in the trans-Atlantic slave trade, be categorized as African American?¹⁰⁴ Can all African immigrants count as African American, regardless of when their migration period occurred/occurs? Further, can African Americans whose family histories are marred by US slaveholding legacies claim *African American*, when the ancestral homes most often claimed in the United States are *West* or *West Central* African? It seems I cannot get away from questions of geographical roots and temporal routes, or how ontologies of being claim significance through locations and movement in historical time periods.

What are the implications of claiming (continental) Africa as an origin point and the US as the final American port of call? For one, the Atlantic Ocean lies unspoken and evident in the literal space between *African* and *American*. Atlantic space connects African as the initially inherited past with US American as the eventually inherited future. The double descriptor appears to hint at a kind of progress in Atlantic histories, such as *Exchanging Our Country Marks* and *Roll, Jordan, Roll*, which investigate the transition from separate people groups into African, as racial and continental belonging, into African American, as a national belonging. Yet, African American could also speak to a co-terminus existence of experiencing both African and US American belonging. African American, then, would function as a double displacement, a person neither belonging fully to Africa nor to the US. African American may also function as a trans-placement, a person able to belong to the US and to Africa and other African Diasporic locations. But would African American point to a

¹⁰⁴ See, for example, Yaa Gyasi “I’m Ghanaian-American. Am I Black?” in NY Times, June 18, 2016, accessed July 7, 2016, http://www.nytimes.com/2016/06/19/opinion/sunday/im-ghanaian-american-am-i-black.html?_r=0.

desired end for African Diasporic belonging? A claiming of US American and (continental) African pasts towards African American presents and futures?

If I choose *Black*, I draw on a descriptor that gained recent popularity in the mid-twentieth century US, and still circulates today.¹⁰⁵ *Black* invokes mid-twentieth century US campaigns for Black is Beautiful and Black Power, or the reimagining of a descriptor standing in for a noun. How James Brown and Stokeley Carmichael took *Black*, a color standing-in for persons, and granted it ontological power and beauty in their time periods.¹⁰⁶ How artists like Amiri Baraka took *Black* to formulate ontologies of strength in the Black Arts Movement, an aesthetic challenge and reclaiming of collective heritages.¹⁰⁷ How scholars of Black Dance, like Thomas DeFrantz and Constance Valis Hill also claim ontologies of power and beauty in following percussive polyrhythms in US Black worlds.¹⁰⁸ But I am also wary of the derivative fallout from a single word, Black, a color standing in for a person. I still remember how Ann Coulter referred to “our Blacks” as an expedient grouping,

¹⁰⁵ Joann W. Kealiinohomoku, “Reflections and Perspectives, 1975,” in *CORD Dance Research Annual VII* (1976): 3 (1-13).

¹⁰⁶ DeFrantz, “African American Dance: A Complex History,” in *Dancing Many Drums*, 3-35; Johnson, *Appropriating Blackness*, 4.

¹⁰⁷ DeFrantz, “African American Dance: A Complex History,” in *Dancing Many Drums*, 3-35; Johnson, *Appropriating Blackness*, 4.

¹⁰⁸ Their American worlds do refer to the Caribbean and South America, while still focused on US worlds, see DeFrantz, “African American Dance: A Complex History,” in *Dancing Many Drums*, 3-35; Constance Valis Hill, *Tap-Dancing America: A Cultural History* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009).

colors with the vague implication of persons.¹⁰⁹ I turn over the risks and benefits of staking kinship on a color, nation-state, or part of a continent.

Black as an imagined visible heritage, based in color, can evoke the unified appearances of African-descended skins painted onto minstrel performers' faces. It can also evoke the unified appearances of African-descended skin colors in filmic mediums, photographic and cinematic, technologies never intended to account for a variety of skin tones outside of highly-reflective, light-colored skin. Black, in terms of technological inheritances, evokes a lack of reflective epidermal surfaces, which leads to darker-skinned actors appearing as persistently dark areas in scenes lit primarily for very fair-skinned actors.¹¹⁰ I'm pointing here to the central imaginary of Black skin as lacking light. This imaginary lingers in the twenty-first century, when the Black skin color variations in *12 Years a Slave* marked and defied the history of imagining what Black people, where Black people are those categorized into sub-Saharan heritages, look like.¹¹¹ How I form ontological existences in my project reveals where and when I think historical persons *belong*, and what I think those historical persons *look like*. History, like theatre, involves decisions about movement and casting.

¹⁰⁹ Huffington Post, "Ann Coulter on Herman Cain: 'Our Blacks Are So Much Better Than Their Blacks' (VIDEO)," November 11, 2011, accessed July 7, 2016, http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2011/11/01/ann-coulter-herman-cain-our-blacks_n_1069172.html.

¹¹⁰ Teju Cole, "A True Picture of Black Skin," in NY Times, February 18, 2015, accessed July 7, 2016, http://www.nytimes.com/2015/02/22/magazine/a-true-picture-of-black-skin.html?_r=0.

¹¹¹ See also Mekado Murphy, "'Daughters of the Dust,' a Seeming Inspiration for 'Lemonade,' Is Restored," in NY Times, April 27, 2016, accessed July 7, 2016, <http://www.nytimes.com/2016/04/28/movies/daughters-of-the-dust-restoration-beyonce-lemonade.html>: "Tom Lanza, the archivist for Cohen Film Collection" stated "The big issue for Julie and A.J. was capturing the variety of African-American skin tones."

I recall heated debates, “African versus Black,” at various moments in my life, from my Dutch-Irish father to my Jamaican friend to my friend from New Orleans. All of them derided *African American* as a US belonging in favor of *Black*, with somehow similar grimaces of revulsion towards the former. I recall what it meant to hear the intensity of conflicted belonging, to catch vocal sounds carrying claims towards inclusion and exclusion based on geographical origins and temporal placement. The statement “He’s *African*, he’s not *Black*,” reverberates in my head, a statement directed towards a first-generation immigrant by a friend whose family’s genealogy remains obscured by the mechanisms of US slaveholding legacies.¹¹² The implication being that only US Black can authentically function to claim a historical belonging in the US, a belonging fraught with labor, sex, and death under slavery and Jim Crow. Only *US Black* can yoke that particular past to a US present where Koritha Mitchell claims, repeatedly, “Black success *attracts* the mob.”¹¹³ She can extend lynching into a foreseeable US future, with presently persistent images of Black bodies lying in US streets and playgrounds, choked on sidewalks and broken in the back of police vans, tasered and shot under restraint, and hanging in US cells.¹¹⁴

¹¹² See also, Keguro Macharia, on leaving US academia and always caught between being Black and not being Black enough, because he was born in Kenya: “On Quitting,” in *The New Inquiry*, May 3, 2013, accessed July 7, 2016, <http://thenewinquiry.com/essays/on-quitting/>.

¹¹³ Koritha Mitchell, *Living with Lynching: African American Lynching Plays, Performance, and Citizenship, 1890-1930* (Urbana, Illinois: University of Illinois Press, 2011) 3. While Mitchell writes this explicitly in relation to Alice Dunbar-Nelson’s work in her introduction to the book, she also repeats this claim on Twitter in response to violence against African Americans in everyday US life.

¹¹⁴ This sentence was originally written soon after the lynching of Michael Brown in Ferguson, Missouri. It has been revised and amended and expanded. The sentence explicitly invokes the following public lynchings: Trayvon Martin, Rekia Boyd, Tamir Rice, Sandra Bland, Natasha McKenna, Freddie Gray, Eric Garner, and Alton Sterling.

A US Black authenticity can imply that continental African immigrants and their descendants do not share a similar or comparable lived experience within the US *or* within history. That African immigrants throughout the continent do not know or experience embodied Black pain as a continuous refrain, from Aunt Hester to Lesley McSpadden. The Middle Passage hovers as a demarcation of authenticity, the transit from (continental) African to (US) Black. And yet, before Lesley McSpadden witnessed her son's body lying in Ferguson's streets, before Frederick Douglass heard his Aunt Hester scream and wrote about it, an unnamed West African girl entered European language archives, manipulated and traumatized like an object in a game, and passed down as a documented pawn between European men.

In the late seventeenth century, on West African shores, an English factor (company agent on African shores) wanted a young African girl for sexual conquest. The English factor groomed her, waited for her to reach womanhood, "to take her for his wife (as they take wives in Guiney)."¹¹⁵ Before the Englishman could take the girl to consummate his sexual claims, a Dutch factor kidnapped and raped the girl, and then made her dance in front of visiting European travelers and the English factor. Does the embodied experience of this unnamed girl, including her coerced dance performance, belong in a long history of African-descended performers understanding European-descended spectators as bodily threats? Does the frustration of a Dutch spectator along the Gold Coast reflect this long history, as well? When at the end of the sixteenth century, West Africans

¹¹⁵ Commander Thomas Phillips, "A Journal of a Voyage Made in the Hannibal of London, Ann. 1693,1694, from England to Cape Monseradoe, in Africa, and Thence Along the Coast of Guiney to Whydah, the Island of St. Thomas, and so forward to Barbadoes. With a cursory account of the Country, the People, their Manners, Fort, Trade, &c," in, *A Collection of Voyages, Some Now First Printed from Original Manuscripts*, eds., Awnsham Churchill and John Churchill, Vol. 6, 172-239 (London: 1704-1732) 202-203.

(again unnamed) refused to allow him and European spectators to witness their dancing, because they did not want to hear the Europeans laugh?¹¹⁶

Limiting US Black belonging within plantation performance, without explicitly including sources written in sub-Saharan locations, has proved productive for scholars and historians, ranging from Saidiya Hartman to Marlon Riggs to Harvey Young. Hartman and Young work a US specificity to analyze embodied acts in the legal and lived experiences of Black belonging on US grounds. As one example, Hartman takes up records of slaves stealing away, to interrogate the limits of criminalized personhoods and the manipulation of criminality by enslaved persons. Stealing away, in particular, belonged in criminalized behavior, as a US legal convention, and also allowed slaves to escape coercion, as a physical leave-taking. Both Hartman and Young refer out to global Black heritages in their work. So it is not that they exclude belonging outside the US. Rather, their US focus enables certain kinds of inquiries and within that scope. Dance scholars have also worked within US Black belonging, including Marshall and Jean Stearns, Thomas DeFrantz, and Marlon Riggs with his documentary *Ethnic Notions*. A US specificity enables these scholars to take up embodied transmission in wide-ranging US populations with sub-Saharan heritages, or how Black persons in the US passed ways of moving and communicating from generation to generation. Limiting geographic belonging enables these scholars to configure African American and Black American within global African Diasporas, while also attending to the specificity of lived experiences for persons with sub-Saharan heritages in the United States.

Atlantic scholars, such as Paul Gilroy and Ira Berlin, configure persons with sub-Saharan heritages within Black Atlantic or Atlantic Creole communities, respectively. They do not explicitly

¹¹⁶ Pieter de Marees, *Description and Historical Account of the Gold Kingdom of Guinea (1602)*, transl. and eds. Albert van Dantzig and Adam Jones (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1982) 171-172.

place sub-Saharan heritages in North American contexts, opting instead for co-terminous and trans-national belonging, or circulation as a mode of belonging. Gilroy situates *The Black Atlantic* as a counterculture of modernity, or “occupying the space between” national and cultural absolutisms.¹¹⁷ His formulation invokes global debates over who classifies as Black, a much wider debate than US debates over Black.¹¹⁸ British definitions can conflict with Australian definitions, which can conflict with US definitions, which can conflict with South American definitions, and so on. His terms for shared cultures and knowledges emphasize a new in-between and lived experience, not fully Black nor African and not fully European nor nation-state.

Ira Berlin uses Atlantic Creole and Atlantic African in *Many Thousands Gone*. His terms highlight the transition from isolated continental pasts into trans-Atlantic networks. Berlin applies *Atlantic Creole* to all of the people who re/located across the Atlantic, into Africa, the Americas, and Europe. He draws on this formulation to emphasize the non-linearity of intertwined Atlantic histories. For Atlantic Africans, he specifically cautions, “Rather than proceed from African to creole or from slavery to freedom, people of African descent in mainland North America crossed the lines between African and creole and between slavery and freedom many times, and not always in the same direction.”¹¹⁹ What troubles me in all of these options, what I can’t seem to set aside, is

¹¹⁷ Gilroy, *The Black Atlantic*, 1-4.

¹¹⁸ See, for example, how Asian activists in Britain claimed “Black” in the 1960s and 1970s, and then moved away from the term, Ruvani Ranasinha, *South Asian Writers in Twentieth-Century Britain: Culture in Transition* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007) 49-50, 53-56. See also Gail Low’s analysis of Black British writing as African, Caribbean, and Indian (South Asian) in Gail Low, “‘Shaping Connections’: From West Indian to Black British:” in *A Black British Canon?* eds., Gail Low and Marion Wynne-Davis, 168-188 (Basingstoke, Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006).

¹¹⁹ Ira Berlin, *Many Thousands Gone: The First Two Centuries of Slavery in America* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2009) 5.

how sub-Saharan Africa inadvertently belongs as a silenced predecessor to US or Atlantic communities. Sub-Saharan regions both persist in embodied transmissions of knowledge, and linger in continuous pasts, lacking a present or future. That is to say, sub-Saharan Africa remains invoked and implicitly acknowledged, as an influential origin vaguely related to the still-existing geographic territories.

But for me, sub-Saharan Africa persists as part of my present understanding of the world as it is, as it became. Sub-Saharan regions relate to diasporic dispersals and geographically-specific cultural practices, a link turned easily into both wounding and bonding forces. Because I can't forget that cold night in Tigoni, Kenya, when Isaac and Aguvasu spoke at length of Bantu, Nilotic, and Cushitic migrations. They, along with Cornel and Lucy and Asalika, connected continental ancestors and diasporic descendants. Their narration synthesized a long history of Africa's continental significance in global dispersals and conquests. And they all treated imperial incursions, from the Portuguese in the fifteenth century to the United States in the twenty-first century, as temporary visitors perpetually under-prepared. This global view motivates my ongoing negotiations over Africa's place in my argument here, and my preference for African Diasporic belonging as a way to recognize the ongoing continuities and changes in sub-Saharan-descended persons circulating knowledges and practices of inherited cultures.

SUB-SAHARAN BLACKNESS AND AFRICAN DIASPORIC BELONGING

But the past does not exist independently from the present. Indeed, the past is only past because there is a present, just as I can point to something over there only because I am here. But

*nothing is inherently there or here. In that sense, the past has no content. The past—or, more accurately, pastness—is a position. Thus, in no way can we identify the past as past.*¹²⁰

So, then, I have settled on situating this dissertation within African Diasporic belonging. I aim to configure my analysis as an African Diasporic inquiry into the historical process of producing narratives about African American theatre and dance in trans-Atlantic circulation. I am investigating and exposing how legitimated history – the narratives we accept as comprising history – works to silence imagined Black dancing bodies and their carrying of sub-Saharan pasts. But where and when do I mean by *Africa*, a continental name with contested origins, an imaginary geography often separated based on oceanic connections? Up to now, I have used sub-Saharan Africa as an equivalent to Black, and Africa in continental relation and contrast to Europe as implied White, without interrogating the limits of these particular kinships.

Africa points to persistent confusion over location and time: which Africa and when? Or, which regions of Africa and when, and how do these regions relate to the rest of the world, over time? Paul Tiyambe Zeleza points out, “Ironically, all of the seven sources of the term “Africa” originally referred to locations in the northern part of the continent, but now the term has become almost synonymous with sub-Saharan African.”¹²¹ In trans-Atlantic contexts, Africa often stands in for sub-Saharan Africa and the regions connected to the Atlantic via trans-Atlantic exchanges. Based on this, the regions of Africa along the Mediterranean, which connect to the Middle East, often receive a specified designation of North Africa, or not quite as Black as sub-Saharan Africa, but still more Black than Europe. Further designations below the Sahara include West, Central, East, or southern.

¹²⁰ Trouillot, *Silencing the Past*, 15.

¹²¹ Paul Tiyambe Zeleza, “African Diasporas: Toward a Global History,” in *African Studies Review* 53:1 (April 2010): 6 (1-19).

In historical narratives, continental Africa often inhabits in a pre-modern past, or lacks progress when compared to civilized US and European presents. Achille Mbembe articulates:

More than any other region, Africa thus stands out as the supreme receptacle of the West's obsession with, and circular discourse about, the facts of "absence," "lack," or "non-being," of identity and difference, of negativeness—in short, of nothingness.¹²²

Configured as nothingness and in comparison to the West, Africa has a past but no history. That is, according to the US and northwestern Europe, Africa contains no sources, and subsequently no facts or events to be archived, preserved, and re-collected for future narratives. Without sources for past events, Africa stands always already behind civilized or modern US and European presents. Africa has been arranged into a continental existence equating lack: isolated, illogical, and always already behind European civilizations. By interrogating underlying assumptions of Africa as (B)lack, Mbembe exposes the overwhelming silence generated through African non-existence, that is, how historiographic practice accepts Africa as a "black hole of reason."¹²³ History as a process of producing narratives also produces *blackness* in direct correlation to Africa as a continental geography.

The legacy of historiographic blackness leads to the underlying silencing and disqualifying of continental Africa from being a *place* where events happen and from being a place through which we can understand how events happened. Historiographic blackness silences Africa from history's dual role as "what happened" and "that which is said to have happened."¹²⁴ This silencing often passes as an a priori or unstated assumption of *where* and *when* history begins: of course people in Africa,

¹²² Achille Mbembe, *On the Postcolony* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001) 4.

¹²³ Mbembe, *On the Postcolony*, 7.

¹²⁴ Trouillot, *Silencing the Past*, 13.

especially those below the Saharan Desert, did not have as advanced civilizations as those in Europe.¹²⁵ The implication being that European choices automatically mean progress and knowledge. Blackness became the varying equivalence of African and Black, or the lightening of North in contrast to sub-Saharan, seen most notably in Hegel's ideas of Africa.¹²⁶ Historiographic practice, as a process of producing history, built the approximate equivalency between sub-Saharan African and Black, which then associated North African with a skin color lighter than Black. This philosophy also de-populated the Sahara Desert into a nearly impenetrable border, regardless of the people groups living there and Islamic histories of Saharan trade.¹²⁷ Thus, North Africa came to belong more in history versus sub-Saharan Africa which did not belong in history at all. But both places, as belonging in continental Africa, were indicted as "black holes of reason" in the process of historical production.

When configured as non-existence, or nothingness, the particularly entrenched blackness of sub-Saharan Africa adversely affects persons belonging from and within these regions. Being from sub-Saharan regions, in effect, means being from nowhere. Being from sub-Saharan Africa functions as an expulsion from nation-state formations, and also as a displacement from sub-Saharan places and times. A person descended from within sub-Saharan Africa belongs only to the past, no matter the time period, as defined by US and European historiographic practice. Any definitions of time or

¹²⁵ Early scholars who refuted this include: AO Stafford, "The Tarik E Soudan," *The Journal of Negro History* 2:2 (Apr 1917): 139-146; William Leo Hansberry, "The Material Culture of Ancient Nigeria," *The Journal of Negro History* 6:3 (Jul 1921): 263-264; "Jefferson's Thoughts on the Negro: Part 1," *The Journal of Negro History* 3:1 (Jan 1918): 55-89; Monroe Work, "The Passing Tradition and African Civilization," *The Journal of Negro History* 1:1 (Jan 1916): 34-41.

¹²⁶ Paul Tiyaambe Zeleza, "Reconceptualizing African Diasporas: Notes from a Historian," in *Transforming Anthropology* 18:1 (2010) 76 (74-78).

¹²⁷ Manning, *The African Diaspora: A History Through Culture*, 36-48, 66-76.

place from within sub-Saharan contexts stand null and void outside of US and European ideas of how time passes and which places matter. Sub-Saharan belonging thus entails an interrelated and overlapping “bundle of silences,” silencing sub-Saharan ontologies of being and silencing sub-Saharan peoples and regions in order to constitute European ontologies of being. Put another way, the repeated and elevated presence of Europeans in Early Modern documents and archives relies on the repeated silencing of sub-Saharans.

When Herman Bennett writes of a Portuguese delegation in 1481, he notes, “At that moment—which the Portuguese associate with 1481 but whose reckoning for local Africans remains obscured in distinct cultural configurations of the past,” he acknowledges the process whereby historical narratives follow European designations of how time passes and progresses.¹²⁸ Or, as Trouillot maintains, “the past has no content. The past—or, more accurately, pastness—is a position. Thus, in no way can we identify the past *as past*.”¹²⁹ Trouillot is emphasizing the Western historical process of demarcating the past, or multiple pasts, as constitutive of *how we got to here*. In other words, part of the historiographic claim to truths in Western practice is selecting and narrating the facts and persons most important to our understanding of how our present emerged. When we know what happened in the past, truthfully, then we understand how our world became as we know it today. In order to do this, Western historiographic practices assigns a position of pastness to certain events, and, as Mbembe articulates with sub-Saharan Africa, to certain locations.

In effect, Western processes of producing history and blackness explicitly silence sub-Saharan territories and peoples, categorizing them as fully insignificant in considering *how we got to here*. Historiographic blackness correlates to insignificance, being displaced from recording or

¹²⁸ Herman Bennett, “Soiled Gods: Displinary and the African-European Encounter in the Fifteenth Century,” (typescript, forthcoming) 1.

¹²⁹ Trouillot, *Silencing the Past*, 15.

documenting, preserving or recollecting knowledge of past facts or events worthy of being composed into narratives. Given the weight of silences around and through sub-Saharan Africa, I could eliminate usage of this regionalized term and remain only with Black. Black, though evoking darkened skin and misrecognition, also evokes the historiographic blackness and pastness assigned to sub-Saharan Africa. To eliminate Africa or sub-Saharan from potentially claiming metaphysical belonging would leave me with people group designations within the continent. For those designations I may often still depend on European approximations of difference, on an archive invested in emphasizing *tribal*, pre-civilized and pre-nation, designations.¹³⁰

In addition, my project lives in contemporary scholarship. It speaks to audiences for whom Africa can mean a simple country or complex continental solidarity. By claiming sub-Saharan heritages across Early Modern continental and oceanic worlds, in embodied interactions, I have already imbricated my work in US scholarship where Black almost always equals sub-Saharan African.¹³¹ I have also staked a claim on imagined Black dancing bodies as displaced sources from sub-Saharan territories. To retain Black and eliminate Africa or sub-Saharan Africa may risk utopic elision of a place that rarely occupies any temporality except the pre-historic, pre-modern past. I will retain Africa as a full continental designation, with regional specificity requiring explicit invocation. Africa and continental Africa will function as equivalents. Although also fraught, sub-Saharan and Black will function as equivalents. I am using this terminology to think through “the differential exercise of power that makes some narratives possible and silences others.”¹³² I am wielding this

¹³⁰ Ngugi wa Thiong’o, “The Myth of Tribe in African Politics,” in *Transition: An International Review* 101 “Looking Ahead” (2009): 16–23; Manning, *The African Diaspora: A History Through Culture*, 52–54, 57.

¹³¹ Zeleza, “African Diasporas: Toward a Global History,” 7.

¹³² Trouillot, *Silencing the Past*, 25.

terminology to investigate the historical process of producing narratives through silenced and imagined Black dancing bodies.

Throughout, I have kept Europe as a continental designation, because this imagined continent remains a productive site of inquiry. In this time period, from the fifteenth through seventeenth centuries, Europe also evokes a wide range of economic and cultural mobility across the continent. Portuguese pilots served on English ships, undercover, just as Dutch and English markets financed trans-Atlantic and Asiatic networks, providing necessary capital and innovatively-designed ships. In addition, imperial borders shifted considerably across Europe from its northern and southern borders, to its western and eastern borders. At one point, for example, Spain's imperial holdings stretched into present-day Austria, Germany, the Netherlands, and Romania. I mean to use European for its ability to locate a kinship recognizable to contemporary readers, and to evoke the territorial privileges that gradually accrued to multiple regions of Europe in multiple sites of conquest and settlement. Even though European heritages are often equated with White or whiteness, I largely refrain from this descriptor. While White may appear the complementary choice to highlight the capability of belonging through presence, as opposed to Black belonging through displacement, the potential remains for White to amplify lightened skin colors in historical worlds, a position bodies with (comparatively) lightened skin colors already occupy.

Even so, I risk authenticating European perspectives and orders of knowledge from sources to legitimation of narratives as history. I will draw upon regional European specificity when possible, and, when relevant will draw out Braudelian concepts of circulation. The Mediterranean, as conceptualized by Fernand Braudel, holds the capability for exchange among Europeans, Asians, and Africans. Braudel's work in Mediterranean worlds later informed Atlantic historiography, wherein the Atlantic facilitated encounters and exchanges as a littoral. Emphasizing trans-oceanic and trans-continental belonging, as evidenced in work by Gilroy and Berlin, as well as Katherine

Dunham and Robert Farris Thompson, opens up questions of exchange as the center of “what happened” and “that which is said to have happened.” If people live isolated, if Europeans do not cross the Mediterranean and if sub-Saharan Africans do not cross the Sahara, then it becomes challenging to imagine how knowledge circulated across oceans, lands, and languages. If people live always already in trans-continental and trans-oceanic exchange, we can explore varied parameters of belonging.

Claiming kinships to arrange sources, persons, and events into historical places and times is difficult. The difficulty in selecting a home for my project, on a basis of shared heritages that may evidence belonging, displacement, and escape, reflects the challenge of what Samantha Pinto calls *Difficult Diasporas*. Pinto observes, “nothing about diaspora is easy to create, to define, to fix. Diaspora demands the specificity of times, places, names, and dates, all the while claiming its multitudes as its major strength, its global significance.”¹³³ For sub-Saharan persons in Early Modern worlds, a range of belongings can apply. I have debated African American or Black (American), as well as Black Atlantic, and Atlantic African for historiographic arrangements of existences. Each of these belongings can fall within the broader descriptor of African Diasporic. African American and Black (American) focus on US kinships in African Diasporas. Black Atlantic and Atlantic African focus on Atlantic kinships in cultural and political heritages of African Diasporas. All of them evoke African loss and American or Atlantic gain. These American and Atlantic gains accrued through repeated and violent dispersals, through repeated and violent coercions of sub-Saharan persons, people groups, and cultural practices.

¹³³ Samantha Pinto, *Difficult Diasporas: The Transnational Feminist Aesthetic of the Black Atlantic* (New York: New York University Press, 2013) 7.

African Diasporic belonging, then, can evoke linear movement from continental African pasts, and American or European in Atlantic futures. A linear kinship-in-motion follows the Afro-Atlantic paradigms critiqued by Paul Tiyambe Zeleza. Afro-Atlantic paradigms center US and European models of African Diaspora “premised on a conception of “Africa” as “sub-Saharan Africa,” a racialized construct that haunted African studies in Euroamerica over the last century.”¹³⁴ With this potential drawback in mind, I still appreciate the global potential for African Diasporic belonging(s), a potential that could bring Afro-European (including Afro-Mediterranean) and Afro-Asian (including Afro-Indian Ocean and Afro-Pacific) circulations into play prior to and alongside Afro-American circulations. I acknowledge, however, that by deploying African Diasporic in a work that analyzes West and West Central Africa in relation to both Europe and the Americas, that I risk repeating the “conflation of African diaspora formulations with the histories and geographies of Atlantic slavery.”¹³⁵

For the purposes of my dissertation, I consider African Diasporic as a kinship that emerges from within repeated displacements, both physical and historiographic. African Diasporic belonging has manifested in multiple historical periods and geographic locations, from within coerced migrations and alongside of desires to silence sub-Saharan African heritages in favor of new ethnic or national belongings. African Diasporic can foster *belonging in the midst of displacement*. For if a person can always stand in African Diasporas, then they can never fully belong to or be located as nationals. I mean national belonging in the US and European sense of liberal nation-state. Thus, African Diasporic persons will never fully belong or be located in American, European, or even African nations. African Diasporic belonging presupposes coerced displacement. Again, here I am writing

¹³⁴ Zeleza, “African Diasporas: Toward a Global History,” 6-7.

¹³⁵ Zeleza, “African Diasporas: Toward a Global History,” 7.

specifically of Early Modern trans-Atlantic worlds and African Diaspora(s), though I mean the term to resonate across historical time periods and geographic locations.

Put another way, in the worlds of the historical narratives I am exploring, displacement of persons with sub-Saharan heritages simultaneously enacts belonging, in that displacement shapes the parameters through which sub-Saharan territories, persons, and sources enter into historical narratives. From our prevailing narrative of African American theatre, we will see this particularly in Jim Crow's dancing body as an imputed and disputed origin of Black dance on US stages. Thomas Dartmouth Rice claimed his knowledge came from an observation of an elderly enslaved laborer in Kentucky. He imbued his broken and crooked attempts at jumping with an enslaved Black body as the source of how to dance. The true or alleged Jim Crow may or may not have existed. Rice may have invented the enslaved laborer to lend authenticity to his performance as coming directly from an enslaved body. Rice could have observed an older enslaved laborer in northern states, enslaved persons who preceded the abolition and phasing out of slavery in those territories. But, Rice's appropriation of danced movements imputed to an enslaved body from Kentucky places sub-Saharan knowledges (within US southern states) onstage in US theatre history, even as it displaces enslaved laborers, and their dance practices, from US stages.

For the purposes of my dissertation, I also consider African Diasporic as a kinship that emerges in oscillation from *belonging to escape*. Because a person may always be located in African Diasporas and displaced from nation-states, they can draw on trans-national and trans-oceanic communities to strengthen cultural ties and knowledges within shared heritages. To recognize African Diasporic belonging as displacement in Atlantic worlds does not presuppose isolation. Earlier, I cited an example of European travelers and spectators prohibited from witnessing dancing, because the West Africans did not want them to laugh. This came from Pieter de Marees's journal of

his time on the Gold Coast.¹³⁶ Andrew Battell, an Englishman who also traveled in West Central Africa in the late sixteenth century, notes a similar occurrence. He was kept captive by the Jaga or Imbangala people. He describes, at one point, a ritual wherein the Imbangala leader summons the devil prior to starting an extensive campaign against another people or region. Battell notes the presence of women, whom he calls witches, the use of zebras' or wild horses' tails, and drums so large they cannot be moved. But, he is kept from witnessing the ritual, since he is a Christian.¹³⁷

Both of these accounts come from time periods prior to the height of trans-Atlantic slavery. Yet, already, western and western central Africans are making moves to exclude European spectators, for one reason or another. Prior to leaving sub-Saharan territories, then, captives may already have understood Europeans as a potentially collective threat to be avoided or escaped. African Diasporic belonging can offer physical and historiographic escapes, and strengths, from nationalized dislocations. It may appear as these do, in conflict and contrast to European presence. It may also appear as a forging of strength based on lived experiences, from African regions to other continents, such as when sub-Saharan Africans in 1472 Valencia presented a petition to form a confraternity. Through their confraternity, they "collected alms and negotiated contracts of manumission on behalf of their fellow black African fellows in captivity."¹³⁸

¹³⁶ De Marees, *Description and Historical Account of the Gold Kingdom of Guinea* (1602), 171-172.

¹³⁷ Andrew Battell, "The strange adventures of Andrew Battell of Leigh in Essex, sent by the Portugals prisoner to Angola, who lived there, and in the adjoining Regions, neere eighteen years," in Samuel Purchas, *Purchas his pilgrimes: In five bookees ...*; Vol. 2, bk 7, chap III, 940-985 (London: Printed by William Stansby for Henrie Fetherstone, 1625) 976-977.

¹³⁸ Debra Blumenthal, "La Casa dels Negres': Black African Solidarity in Late Medieval Valencia," in *Black Africans in Renaissance Europe*, eds., T. F. Earle and K. J. P. Lowe, 225-260 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005) 227.

In this section, I've introduced the challenges of laying out metaphysical parameters for sub-Saharan Africans to belong within and contribute to historical narratives. In the case studies to come, we will explore and interrogate historiographic belonging according to Trouillot's framework. In the first chapter, I lay out the prevailing historical narratives within African American theatre and dance. I assess the primary modes of embodied belonging for imagined Black dancing bodies and how the Kongo moresca fails to adhere as a performance event through the historical process. This chapter is built on Trouillot's explanation of interdependence, "that new facts cannot emerge in a vacuum. They will have to gain their right to existence in light of the field constituted by previously created facts."¹³⁹ I cannot merely state, *Kongolese dancers performed a moresca*, full stop, because of the overlapping and related restrictions on qualifying imagined Black dancing bodies to carry and transmit knowledge of danced movements and rhythms *now* known as European.

The first chapter will also proceed in outlining the prevailing scholarship on the moresca, and its related practices, *moros y cristianos* and the *morris*. This chapter reveals the substantial challenges to reconfiguring the historiographic parameters of African Diasporic performance by merely adding sources, like Lopes and Pigafetta, to gain a more complete picture of *what happened*. In other words, even in trying to write the Kongo moresca into narratives of African Diasporic and African American performances, a lengthy historical – philosophical, processual, textual, documented – record exists as always already displacing sub-Saharan Africans from performing a dance like the moresca without the attendant compulsive coercions of enslavement to force imagined Black dancing bodies into foreign movements and rhythms.

In the final two chapters, I elaborate on the related processes of centering imagined Europeanist dancing bodies as present, principal figures of historical narratives of dance, and of

¹³⁹ Trouillot, *Silencing the Past*, 49.

silencing and negating imagined Black dancing bodies as bestial and non-human figures. In the second case study, I detail the lengthy and extensive process of forming and writing an imagined dancing body with continental European belonging. I explore how the imagined ballet body became the ideal standard of how to qualify dance worthy of writing down, preserving, and then composing into historical narratives. I do so by showing how Renaissance Italian historiography formed the ideal human as the proper historiographic subject, and how dance masters followed this by articulating aristocratic dancing as knowledge of the ideal human *in motion*.

This journey takes us from fifteenth century Italian courts, all the way up through the court of King Louis XIV and the first written narrative on any dance: court ballet. I reveal the comparatively late instantiation of an imagined ballet body as the ideal human and *European* source through which we can ascertain *what happened*. I concurrently show how this comparatively late instantiation became the legitimated embodied source of danced knowledge, in that, dance did not *happen* in written sources unless those sources pointed towards or away from the imagined ballet body. The focus of this chapter then is also how the imagined ballet body emerged as that which is said to have happened, or the legitimated embodied source for *how* we know dance happened.

In the third and final chapter, I detail the lengthy and extensive process of fashioning and negating an imagined Black dancing body as non-human and, thus, unqualified to be written down, preserved, and recollected for historical narratives. I explain the overall frequency of leaping and mock combat, as mentioned in European-language sources on West Africa and West Central Africa. I then focus on printed accounts by European travel writers and editors, in order to emphasize the limited creation of written sources into circulating archives of knowledge about West African dance. This journey takes us from Alvise Cadamosto's comparison of Canary Islanders to leaping goats, all the way up through Willem Bosman's derision of West African nobility. Alongside of this, I show

how European travelers consistently related imagined and Black bodies, dancing and otherwise, to savage beasts and to the ground.

As the seventeenth century proceeded, European travelers and spectators accelerated and amplified the kinship between imagined Black dancing bodies and beasts of the earth, even as they wrote themselves as civilizing and humanizing influences in West African communities. Then, as the eighteenth century opens, Bosman asserts that all sub-Saharan Africans belong only as slaves. The imagined Black dancing body thus becomes the embodied source deserving of being enslaved to civilized and humane Europeans. And the danced movements and rhythms enacted by imagined Black bodies do not qualify as human movement, therefore they do not qualify to be written, preserved, or recollected for historical narratives of human civilization. I close this chapter by exploring what I term silences in reverse, or the limits of knowledge wrought through European coercion and conquest. At several moments and in several locations, West and West Central Africans refused to allow European travelers to view aspects of their dancing, ritual worship, or everyday life. In these cases, then, Europeans cannot serve as sources of what happened or that which is said to have happened.

Belonging while Black, then, offers an opening gambit for my history of a history of how only certain danced rhythms and movements came to be known as Black. If I explicate the limits of historiographic interdependence woven in and through historical narratives of both African American theatre and Black dance, will the Kongolese *moresca* belong as evidence of African and European exchanges without attendant coercion? If I reveal the strategies for fashioning the imagined ballet body as the embodied source through which we know dance happened, will I merely re-center ballet? Or will I open up further avenues for sub-Saharan performers to contribute to trans-Saharan and trans-Mediterranean exchanges apart from enslavement? If I expose early strategies of displacement and silencing wielded by European spectators, will the negated West

African dancers belong as embodied and human sources of danced knowledge? Will I be able to forge *belonging while Black* as a historiographic ontology of being in, moving through, and causing dance history to happen? Let's take a breath, anticipate "the feeling of jump," and begin.¹⁴⁰

¹⁴⁰ Macharia, "fugitivity"; riffing on Shailja Patel, *Migritude* (New York: Kaya Press, 2020) 124.

– 1 – BELONGING THROUGH DISPLACEMENT

*[T]hey dance and move their feet, as it were in a Moresco, with great gravetie and sobrietie.*¹⁴¹

To qualify, or legitimate, imagined dancing bodies as embodied sources of danced knowledge means to analyze movement, in writing, for evidence of what happened, how it happened, and who made it happen. As a reminder, Diana Taylor develops the terminology of repertoire to specify how dances can carry and transmit remembered knowledge of past practices into performance. Danced repertoires entail rehearsed and routine movements and rhythms. Repertoires are comprised of the routines executed within dance performances, the rhythms and steps, spatial configurations and timing. She notes that repertoire, “enacts embodied memory,” and “Embodied and performed acts generate, record, and transmit knowledge.”¹⁴² Rhythms and steps, timing and gesture, bring knowledges of past movement into the present, onto the dance floor or the dancing ground, for possible transmission into the future and to other cultures or people groups. As sources of knowledge, then, imagined dancing bodies bring forth memory and transmit their versions of those

¹⁴¹ Duarte Lopes and Filippo Pigafetta, “A report of the Kingdome of Congo, a region of Affrica,” in *Purchas his Pilgrimes ...*, trans. Abraham Hartwell and ed. Samuel Purchas, Vol. 2, bk 7, chap IIII [sic], 986-1026 (London: Printed by William Stansby for Henrie Fetherstone, 1625) 1018–1019.

¹⁴² Taylor, *The Archive and the Repertoire*, 20, 21.

remembered knowledges over the course of a performance event. They generate past knowledge brought into a present time for an unforeseen but potentially anticipated future.

At particular issue in this chapter, is how interdependence affects the capability of imagined dancing bodies to belong as embodied sources of knowledge. Trouillot cautions, “As sources fill the historical landscape with their facts, they reduce the room available to other facts.”¹⁴³ Simply adding sources to the historical process will not necessarily lead to “a more accurate reconstitution of the past.”¹⁴⁴ Namely, “Even if we imagine the landscape to be forever expandable, the rule of interdependence implies that new facts cannot emerge in a vacuum.”¹⁴⁵ Historians establish facts in relation to other facts. Individual traces of the past may *mean* within their written report or document, but they may not mean anything when placed up against other sources of the time, or scholarship about the particular time and place. In effect, facts, “will have to gain their right to existence in light of the field constituted by previously created facts.”¹⁴⁶

Moreover, because of how interdependence operates within the historical process, “sources occupy competing positions in the historical landscape.”¹⁴⁷ New facts, when qualified and legitimated, “may dethrone some of these [previously established] facts, erase or qualify others.”¹⁴⁸ So then, our task is to ascertain how the Lopes and Pigafetta report competes with and diverges from the prevailing historical landscape, “the field constituted by previously created facts.”¹⁴⁹

¹⁴³ Michel-Rolph Trouillot, *Silencing the Past: Power and the Production of History* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1995) 49

¹⁴⁴ Trouillot, *Silencing the Past*, 49

¹⁴⁵ Trouillot, *Silencing the Past*, 49

¹⁴⁶ Trouillot, *Silencing the Past*, 49

¹⁴⁷ Trouillot, *Silencing the Past*, 49

¹⁴⁸ Trouillot, *Silencing the Past*, 49

¹⁴⁹ Trouillot, *Silencing the Past*, 29, 49

Attempting to incorporate new facts may inevitably shift the legitimated historical landscape, and likewise shift the parameters for future historical narratives. Qualifying a new fact, as I am exploring here with Lopes and Pigafetta, has the potential to disqualify previously legitimated narratives and facts in the historical landscape.

Put differently, we are exploring how prevailing narratives of Black dance, in relation to African American theatre, African Diasporic performance, and European court dancing, exclude and silence the imagined Black dancing bodies in the sixteenth-century Kongo court from qualifying as embodied evidence of a *moresca* performance in West Central Africa. As a reminder, I am explicating this performance based on the first step of Trouillot's process: "the moment of fact creation (the making of *sources*)."¹⁵⁰ If the imagined Black dancing bodies do not qualify as embodied sources of *what happened* in the Kongo court, then the performance does not qualify as a fact or event for the purpose of writing historical narratives. Disqualifying, or silencing, the imagined Black dancing bodies in this Kongo performance will effectively silence and disqualify the performance as an event available for the second step of Trouillot's process: "the moment of fact assembly (the making of *archives*)."¹⁵¹ Exposing and analyzing silences reveal ontologies of being as process of belonging, where and when and how a person or event *is allowed* to exert influence in historical narratives.

Based on how imagined dancing bodies are written and documented through movement, historians (ideally) know what dances occurred and how they occurred. Moreover, historians (ideally) know where the dances and dancers came from, and how the dancers learned or acquired the embodied knowledges necessary for performance. To qualify the imagined Black dancing bodies as

¹⁵⁰ Trouillot, *Silencing the Past*, 26

¹⁵¹ Trouillot, *Silencing the Past*, 26

embodied sources, who danced repertoires *like* a moresca “with gravetie and sobrietie,” would thus make claims on previous moments when West Central African performers learned and rehearsed these repertoires. To claim that dancers, located within and from West Central Africa, performed repertoires *like* a moresca in the Kongo court, also claims the potential for prior acquisition of the embodied knowledges necessary to execute steps to evoke a moresca for a Portuguese traveler and Italian humanist. So, for instance, *if* we could qualify the imagined Black dancing bodies as embodied sources of danced knowledge, then this Kongolese performance could become an event. We could discuss where and how this Kongolese moresca influenced concurrent or subsequent events in dance history, including moresche and morris dances in sixteenth-century Europe and West Central Africa, and those dances known, carried, and transmitted by enslaved sub-Saharan to the Americas.

In this chapter, I continue negotiating how and why the Lopes and Pigafetta source cannot yet attain legitimacy, based on “the field constituted by previously created facts.”¹⁵² I reveal this impossibility, or failure of Lopes and Pigafetta to cohere, based on how narratives of Black dance relate to trans-Atlantic coercion in African Diasporas and African American theatre, and how Black dance further relates to narratives of European court dancing. I use *prevail* for its connotations of power, reign, and conquest. Gurinder K. Bhambra, in applying Trouillot to postcolonialism and modernity, observes, “Note that what is *not* being said here is that [the historical process] makes some narratives more ‘true’ than others, but rather, more powerful.”¹⁵³ It may, in fact, be true that Kongolese dancers performed a moresca in honor of Lopes as a representative of Portugal. But, the prevailing narratives of sub-Saharan influences in trans-Atlantic circulation, and of European court

¹⁵² Trouillot, *Silencing the Past*, 49

¹⁵³ Gurinder K. Bhambra, *Rethinking Modernity: Postcolonialism and the Sociological Imagination* (Basingstoke, Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007) 10

dancing in relation to the moresca and morris, do not yet *allow* this trace of the past to achieve factual legitimacy. The historical landscape prohibits this trace from emerging as a fact or event available for inclusion in archives and in narratives. Moving forward, I define the prevailing historical landscape and negotiate the qualification of Lopes and Pigafetta's report, as well as the imagined Black dancing bodies within.

EMBODIED BELONGING

*Silencing ... is an erasure more effective than the ... failure of memory.*¹⁵⁴

Over time, the repetition and revision of danced repertoires accrues into a knowledge base within embodied practice. Embodied practice locates kinds and qualities of movement and sound held in common across people groups or regions, nations or continents, religions or cultures. How certain people groups move through labor or rites, how certain religions compose in harmony or dissonance, establish interrelated bases of embodied practice in correlation to location, time, and distance. Embodied practice generates an epistemology of being *in motion*, such as what it means to move and sound like a person from sub-Saharan Africa. Embodied practice points to how, in the process of historical production, we qualify being *in motion* to spatial and temporal homes. When we can ascertain the sounds and movements characteristic of a person from a particular region, then we can use recorded (written or otherwise) rhythms and movements to narrate change over time and space. Embodied practice allows historians to make claims on particular gestures or postures,

¹⁵⁴ Trouillot, *Silencing the Past*, 60

rhythms or movements, as being *from* somewhere, being *rooted* in a specific region and people group. Roots imply origins, that is, how we get from *somewhere back then and there* to somewhere closer to *here and now*. When we say, those dancing bodies *there* evidence the original archival predecessors to the dance later known as Patting Juba, which then appears again in *Joe Turner's Come and Gone*, we stake a claim and bind knowledge of dancing within certain locations and time periods. We plant a dance in a place and a time, and ask, how did the dance travel from there?

Throughout this chapter, I am thinking through, in particular, how Jim Crow's dancing body stands as a philosophical origin or historiographic root of displacing sub-Saharan-influenced dance practices on the minstrel stage. By philosophical origin, I mean that historical narratives of African American theatre use imagined Black dancing bodies to write either towards or away from minstrelsy. While several characters premiered on the early minstrel stage, Jim Crow remains widely known and circulated, with his angled and bent body gracing the covers of W. T. Lhamon, Jr.'s seminal work, *Jump Jim Crow: Lost Plays, Lyrics, and Street Prose of the First Atlantic Popular Culture* and Katrina Dyonne Thompson's recent *Ring Shout, Wheel About: The Racial Politics of Music and Dance in North American Slavery*. Jim Crow also remains widely known and circulated from his "strange career," to borrow from C. Vann Woodward, highlighting the segregation of public spaces from the United States to South Africa.¹⁵⁵ And Jim Crow's dancing body exemplifies a historical philosophy of displaced belonging: where imagined and Black dancing bodies primarily belong in written sources and historical narratives as removed from humanity and composed, or depicted, by European-descended writers and performers.

Jim Crow made an early, documented stage appearance in a venue on Fifth Street in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. Robert Nevin's 1867 article in the *Atlantic Monthly* describes how Thomas

¹⁵⁵ C. Vann Woodward, *The Strange Career of Jim Crow* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1974).

Dartmouth (TD) Rice bargained for or stole the clothes off an African American dockworker's back. This man's name is recorded as Cuff. From offstage, Cuff reportedly requested his work clothes be returned, and when TD Rice either did not hear or ignored him, Cuff walked onstage, naked, to ask again. His vocal and nakedly physical demand for his clothes to be returned, onstage, both interrupted and authenticated Rice's performance to Pittsburgh audiences.¹⁵⁶ As to Rice's physical performance, Nevin only notes how Rice "waddled" onstage in "a coarse straw hat ... over a dense black wig of matted moss."¹⁵⁷ In 1947, Marian Hannah Winter writes of the "accompanying jig and shuffle" to the song "Jump, Jim Crow."¹⁵⁸ Sean Murray asserts, "most agree Rice appropriated the stableman's song and stilted dance ... by putting on a pathetic limp and crooking his shoulder."¹⁵⁹ And Jim Crow's illustrated body, from the period, draws his arms and legs extended out at asymmetrical and oblique angles in relation to his torso. From this "spectacular performance of disability"¹⁶⁰ mapped onto an enslaved dancing body and as enacted by TD Rice, knowledge of

¹⁵⁶ Robert P. Nevin, "Stephen C. Foster and Negro Minstrelsy," in *The Atlantic Monthly*, Nov 1867. Center for American Music, University of Pittsburgh, <http://digital.library.pitt.edu/u/ulsmanuscripts/pdf/31735064660966.pdf>, 609; Lott, *Love & Theft: Blackface Minstrelsy and the American Working Class* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013) 18-20.

¹⁵⁷ Nevin, "Stephen C. Foster and Negro Minstrelsy," 609.

¹⁵⁸ Marian Hannah Winter, "Juba and American Minstrelsy," in *Inside the Minstrel Mask: Readings in Nineteenth-Century Blackface Minstrelsy*, eds., Annemarie Bean, James V. Hatch, Brooks McNamara, 223-241 (Hanover: Wesleyan University Press, 1996) 225.

¹⁵⁹ Sean Murray, "That 'Weird and Wonderful Posture': Jump, 'Jim Crow' and the Performance of Disability," in *The Oxford Handbook of Music and Disability Studies*, ed., Blake Howe, et. al. 357-370 (Oxford: Oxford University Press) 357, 363; cf Daphne Brooks, *Bodies in Dissent: Spectacular Performances of Race and Freedom, 1850-1910* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2006) 17.

¹⁶⁰ Murray, "That 'Weird and Wonderful Posture'," 363

sub-Saharan influenced dance practices enter US stages and US theatre finally graces the world stage with uniquely national contributions and influences.

In her book, *Ring Shout, Wheel About*, Katrina Dyonne (KD) Thompson describes how minstrelsy relates to a particularly national philosophy of US entertainment. She explains, “Several scholars trace the origins of American entertainment culture to the beginning of blackface minstrelsy.”¹⁶¹ By American here, she means specifically United States entertainment culture, and that with minstrelsy, the United States began to differentiate its national culture from European antecedents. Minstrelsy scholar William J. Mahar’s *Behind the Burnt Cork Mask* describes how minstrelsy “Ethiopian sketches” mirrored society plays of the nineteenth century. In that, many blackface minstrel characters parodied the “undemocratic artifice of the wealthy.”¹⁶² They played up rigid European social hierarchies against “true American values of modesty, honesty, and sincerity.”¹⁶³ Eric Lott further points to critics in the 1840s, who derided minstrelsy for this very reason: blackface minstrelsy situated US American cultural production with slaves, complaining “that American culture was turning out to be not only “questionable” but black.”¹⁶⁴ Blackface minstrelsy took longstanding practices of rendering blackness onstage, from black veils or paint in

¹⁶¹ KD Thompson, *Ring Shout, Wheel About: The Racial Politics of Music and Dance in North American Slavery* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2014) 4.

¹⁶² Mahar, *Behind the Burnt Cork Mask: Early Blackface Minstrelsy and Antebellum American Popular Culture* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1999) 165

¹⁶³ Mahar, *Behind the Burnt Cork Mask*, 166.

¹⁶⁴ Lott, *Love & Theft*, 102, 103.

English masques and cycle plays, to burnt cork and soot in Renaissance Spain.¹⁶⁵ With the minstrelsy format, performers and producers turned blackface into an entertainment export ascribed to the United States's unique and peculiar culture, and subsequently claimed predecessor of both vaudeville and musical theatre.

In Trouillot's terms, Jim Crow's dancing body is both "what happened" and "that which is said to have happened." Jim Crow is an event or fact in African American theatre history: minstrel performers, the first of whom were usually men with northern European heritages from the urban northern United States,¹⁶⁶ claimed their materials originated with enslaved laborers south of the Mason Dixon. And most of them, at least for a while, turned a sizable profit with their minstrel scenes and types.¹⁶⁷ Jim Crow is also *how* we know what happened to African American dance practices and theatres, in that African American theatre didn't *happen* on US stages until working-class men, descended from northern European regions, put blackfaced and enslaved characters onstage. Jim Crow, through his dancing body, operates as a philosophical origin of sub-Saharan displacement both from the theatrical stage and historical narratives of theatre. Sub-Saharan-influenced embodied practice, as coerced into trans-Atlantic circulation, does not *belong* onstage or in theatre history until displaced and negated by blackface minstrel performers. Jim Crow, as a philosophical original dancing body, exemplifies an illusory presence of sub-Saharan embodied practice.

¹⁶⁵ Virginia Mason Vaughan, *Performing Blackness on English Stages, 1500-1800* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005) 13-14, 21; Beusterien, *An Eye on Race: Perspectives from Theater in Imperial Spain* (Lewisburg, Pennsylvania: Bucknell University Press, 2006) 101-104.

¹⁶⁶ Dan Emmett is the exception here, having grown up in the frontier area of Mount Vernon, Ohio.

¹⁶⁷ Alexander Saxton, "Blackface Minstrelsy," in *Inside the Minstrel Mask*, (67-85) 69-70.

Accordingly, historical narratives of African American theatre begin with the coerced entertainment of blackface minstrelsy. We see this from Marlon Riggs's educational documentary *Ethnic Notions*, and in recent collections, such as *A History of African American Theatre* by Errol G. Hill and James V. Hatch, to *The Cambridge Companion to African American Theatre*, edited by Harvey Young. The first essay in *The Cambridge Companion*, for instance, is entitled "Slavery, performance, and the design of African American Theatre." In it, Douglas A. Jones, Jr., starts from Frederick Douglass's observations on a minstrelsy performance by Gavitt's Original Ethiopian Serenaders. Jones locates a "conceptual ambivalence" towards performance as uplift and a reification of "entrenched sociopolitical norms."¹⁶⁸ Overall, Jones explores how "the critical discourse" from the antebellum era, the era of blackface minstrelsy's ascendance, "continues to inform how we imagine the form and function of the African American theatre."¹⁶⁹ In other words, the interdependence of blackface minstrelsy pervades and haunts how we write about African American theatre history. Within minstrelsy, Jim Crow's presence operates as a silencing of sub-Saharan embodied practice, in that sub-Saharan influences are not worthy of being performed, recorded, and preserved for future recollection until blackface minstrels take the stage.

KD Thompson confronts minstrelsy's prominence as an original and innovative moment of coerced theft and illusory wholeness. In *Ring Shout, Wheel About*, she seeks to "challenge the commonly accepted belief that the minstrel show was the first American entertainment genre."¹⁷⁰ Specifically, she argues, "Scenes of enslaved blacks performing music, song, and dance for the amusement of white spectators represented the first major American entertainment setting, long

¹⁶⁸ Jones, "Slavery, Performance, and the Design of African American Theatre," in *The Cambridge Companion to African American Theatre*, ed. Harvey Young, 15-33 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012) 15.

¹⁶⁹ Jones, "Slavery, Performance, and the Design of African American Theatre," 16 (15-33)

¹⁷⁰ Thompson, *Ring Shout, Wheel About*, 5.

before minstrel shows appeared.”¹⁷¹ Throughout her book, KD Thompson analyzes archived sources of performance within slavery, from European travelers’ accounts throughout West Africa, to sources describing performances on slave ships, and then accounts of plantation coercion. She treats slavery as ongoing sites of historical process, in order “to fully reveal how centuries of blacks performing for white audiences in a political, social, and cultural institution such as slavery contributed to the foundation of American entertainment.”¹⁷² KD Thompson’s book offers a longer history of coerced performances as entertainment, and also works within the parameters of minstrelsy scholarship. Namely, she works from within European coercions of enslaved and Black bodies in performance. European-language sources of coercion and torture furnish both what happened and serve as that which is said to have happened. Philosophically, *how* we know sub-Saharan embodied practice still originates from within coercive entertainment and displacement.

Further, like Lott, Mahar, and even W. T. Lhamon, Jr., KD Thompson treats minstrelsy as inextricable from enslavement. Lhamon, for instance, draws attention to the still-living and older enslaved laborers in post-emancipation urban New York, even as he emphasizes how early minstrel performers “owned no slaves, minted no guineas, often could not vote, could make no Fugitive Slave Laws, set no demeaning wages.”¹⁷³ Lott further analyzes minstrel performances for the correlation between enslaved characters and imputed free wage slavery of working class and urban audiences.¹⁷⁴ While she does not focus on northern US performers or audiences, KD Thompson moves through earlier sources by slave traders, abolitionists, and slave owners. She narrates “a

¹⁷¹ Thompson, *Ring Shout, Wheel About*, 5.

¹⁷² Thompson, *Ring Shout, Wheel About*, 5.

¹⁷³ Lhamon, *Raising Cain: Blackface Performance from Jim Crow to Hip Hop* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1998) 16-17; 236 fn 51.

¹⁷⁴ Lott, *Love and Theft*.

common occurrence through the American plantation society, enslaved blacks performing for white audiences,” and subsequently configures minstrelsy as the after-effect or after-image of historical processes inherent within the institution of slavery. For all of these scholars, trans-Atlantic slavery affects performance choices on the minstrel stage. Even for Lhamon, Lott, and Dale Cockrell, who all emphasize the high degree of interracial interaction among working class laborers and performers, slavery functions as inspiration for political and economic commentary under cover of burnt cork and greasepaint.

By configuring Jim Crow as a historiographic origin of enacting and displacing sub-Saharan dance practices onstage, I am thinking through and querying the consistency of how we imagine and write about sub-Saharan and Black dance as embodied practices under coercion and enslavement. Within these parameters, imagined Black dancing bodies emerge from within oppression, always already seeking to undo or work against trans-Atlantic slave economies. As we will see in the pages to follow, the philosophical parameters of interdependence, as taken from “the field constituted by previously created facts,” demand that imagined Black dancing bodies belong in historical narratives through mechanisms of displacement and coercion. Even historical narratives, like that of KD Thompson and Lynn Fauley Emery, which begin in the centuries prior to blackface minstrelsy, configure their work in the “field of power” of trans-Atlantic slavery. Thus, when we have a source like Lopes and Pigafetta, where coercion appears potentially absent and the imagined Black dancing bodies appear in compared relation to a European court dance, the performance does not attain legitimacy as an event for inclusion in historical narratives.

To show the extent of the containment exerted by minstrelsy’s interdependence, I lay out the prevailing parameters of African American theatre and dance in trans-Atlantic narratives of embodied memory and knowledge. I demonstrate how the philosophical parameters of interdependence demand that the *moresca* belong in historical narratives of European embodied

practice. To show this, I lay out the prevailing parameters European narratives of embodied memory and knowledge, which qualify the *moresche*, *morrises*, and *moros y cristianos* as repertoires originated from within European embodied practice. Finally, I draw on Susan Leigh Foster to work through a strategy of treating history as staged compositions, or choreographed narratives. The worlds of historical narratives will, quite literally, become the stages upon which we map and test philosophical presence and absence, over time. I do this, to emphasize how historical narratives activate and silence specific imaginary movements of dancing bodies, through places and times, across geographic locations and passing through time periods. By imagining historical narratives as staged, I am also asking us to engage in subjunctive imagining, or mapping what could have happened – how embodied transmissions of dance *may* have happened – to highlight how “differential exercise of power” enables some questions and silences others. That is, the very philosophies through which embodied sources offer events or facts for inclusion into archives available for narrative retrieval, shape the questions we can ask and thus, prove, within previously established fields of knowledge.

ORIGINAL DISPLACEMENT

*Power does not enter the story once and for all, but at different times and from different angles. It precedes the narrative proper, contributes to its creation and to its interpretations.*¹⁷⁵

In this section, I am analyzing the philosophical parameters of displacement, which consign imagined Black dancing bodies to coerced and enslaved belonging through both slavery and minstrelsy. By *displacement*, I am invoking the story of Archimedes’s discovery. The story goes

¹⁷⁵ Trouillot, *Silencing the Past*, 28-29.

something like this: One day, Archimedes got into his bath. The water spilled over, and Archimedes realized that his own body volume had displaced a certain, related, volume of water. He ran through the streets, shouting, “Eureka!” Archimedes was thrilled, because he had been assigned a particularly challenging problem by Hiero II. Hiero II, who ruled Sicily in the third century BCE, gave pure gold to a goldsmith, in order to have a crown made. Hiero II suspected that a goldsmith had substituted silver, thereby acquiring a small fortune in pure gold. Archimedes tested the volume of displaced water caused by the crown. He compared this to the volumes of displaced water caused by an equal mass of pure silver and another equal mass of pure gold, respectively, thus ascertaining by how much the goldsmith cheated Hiero II.

By using displacement, I mean to draw out the connotations of purposeful theft and illusory wholeness in the tale of Archimedes and Hiero II’s gold-silver crown. The Archimedes story has two levels of displacement: the original substitution of silver for gold which contributed to the creation of an alloy to pass as pure gold, and the volumes of water moved aside by the alloy and the control masses of pure gold and pure silver. For the first level, the goldsmith attempted to pass off a crown, forged as a gold-silver alloy, as pure gold. To make the alloy, the goldsmith removed gold and added silver. He removed a significant amount of the original pure gold, in order to replace it with a different precious metal, and thereby increase his profit margin. Not only would the goldsmith profit from the crown alloy as if it were made of pure gold, he would profit from the pure gold he removed and kept aside for his own use.

The goldsmith staked this choice based on his ability to make a crown alloy that appeared to resemble pure gold. He risked making an incompletely gold crown, because the alloy would serve as a believable illusion of purity. In other words, the goldsmith effaced and erased the evidence of an alloy, to establish its presence as pure gold. For the second level of displacement, we have the material affect of the displaced water. The alloy caused a certain, related, volume of water to be

displaced. Archimedes, knowing the presumed compositions of the alloy, tested the crown against pure masses of gold and silver, respectively. Only by testing the crown against controlled pure metals, and assessing them with an impartial crucible of water, did Archimedes discover the extent of illusory purity inherent in the crown alloy.

The first level of displacement correlates to the erasure and silencing of imagined Black bodies, dancing and otherwise, in written sources on slavery and on the minstrel stage. Imagined Black bodies primarily belong in Early Modern documents as embodied sources of financial and economic investments. By *primarily belong*, I mean that imagined Black bodies remain widely legible and visible through the marked tallies of gains and losses in trans-Atlantic trading ventures.¹⁷⁶ Across the breadth of archival documentation attesting to European progress in the *Early Modern* era, imagined Black bodies rarely appear as humans or persons. Silencing imagined Black bodies, by composing them as potentially vested gains, produces and legitimates the authority and credibility of written sources in this time period.

The first level of displacement also correlates to the erasure and silencing of sub-Saharan influences on the minstrelsy stage, whereby male performers with northern European heritages enact a semblance of enslaved dance repertoires on US stages. Imagined Black dancing bodies belong as embodied sources of financial and economic investment, by virtue of being displaced, that is silenced and negated, through blackface minstrelsy. Physical displacement generates the authority and credibility through which minstrel performers garner financial return. These related coercions evoke an alloy, because the presence of European power masks and effaces sub-Saharan humanity, in favor of legitimating a trans-Atlantic kinship with progress, instead of death and disposability.

¹⁷⁶ Stephanie E. Smallwood, *Saltwater Slavery: A Middle Passage from Africa to American Diaspora* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2007).

Deploying the idea of an alloy calls into question the purity of Hiero II's gold crown and the purity of European progress.

The second level of displacement correlates to the material and historiographic affects of violent coercion in slavery and minstrelsy. Meaning that, the coercive process of capturing sub-Saharan Africans and documenting the financial and economic returns from enslaved labor, and the coercive process of removing a semblance of sub-Saharan dance repertoires from enslaved laborers and documenting minstrelsy performance and its attendant popularity and profits, generated and legitimated oppression as a historiographic force and persons with European heritages as those who caused history to happen. Again, as Michelle Wright points out, the centrality of trans-Atlantic coercions, lead us to narratives of “overcoming obstacles through struggle (or “uplift”)” in “a linear progress narrative or, when reversed (as in Afropessimism) a reverse linear narrative indicating that no *Black* progress has been made because of the continual oppression by white Western hegemonies.”¹⁷⁷ In the wake of trans-Atlantic and minstrel coercions, the only narratives left are those of “uplift,” whereby enslaved sub-Saharanans and their descendants aspire to and achieve ideas of European progress; or narratives of regress, whereby enslaved sub-Saharanans and their descendants fail to achieve ideas of European progress, because of the overwhelming and insurmountable obstacles instantiated through oppression. In terms of the Archimedes story, the displaced water becomes the *only* narrative, the only historiographic consequence to write towards or away from.

In Atlantic history, we have extensive archives of European corporate and national battles over sub-Saharan lands and persons, under the guise of returns on investment, substantiated by the

¹⁷⁷ Wright, *Physics of Blackness: Beyond the Middle Passage Epistemology* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press)

calculations and columns in corporate and national sources of European ventures.¹⁷⁸ Many Atlantic historians focus specifically on the tension between economically valued belonging and personhoods. How do we narrate the lived experiences – what was it like to *live* as enslaved sub-Saharanans and their descendants in trans-Atlantic worlds – through archived documents built from economic dispossession and displacement? In Trouillot’s terms, how do we narrate lived experiences from archives and sources literally invested in Black bodies as gains and losses? How can we attend to imagined Black bodies as sources of knowledge about danced repertoires and embodied practices from sub-Saharan Africa, when the written sources and collected archives map imagined Black bodies within economic belonging as “the rules for credibility and interdependence?”

Scholars like Philip D. Morgan and Melville Herskovits work through culturally performed personhoods, in that they claim rhythms and danced movements as evidence of persistent and resistant sub-Saharan cultural heritages under US pressures.¹⁷⁹ P. Sterling Stuckey further theorizes how sub-Saharan-descended *bodies* could belong to European formations of commodity exchange, even as sub-Saharan-descended *persons* could escape in dancing and singing. Stuckey, for instance, describes the prominence of “the gun and the whip” to force the enslaved to dance, and, concurrently, “Dance was the most difficult of all art forms to erase from the slave’s memory.”¹⁸⁰ That is, despite the coercions under which enslaved sub-Saharanans danced and were recorded as dancing, the routine and rehearsed knowledges of their repertoires renewed and affirmed their embodied memories. Rodriguez King-Dorset demonstrates, while Atlantic historians agree that

¹⁷⁸ Trouillot, *Silencing the Past*, 50-53.

¹⁷⁹ Melville J. Herskovits, *The Myth of the Negro Past* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1958) 110-142; Philip D. Morgan, *Slave Counterpoint: Black Culture in the Eighteenth-Century Chesapeake & Lowcountry* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1998) 580-597.

¹⁸⁰ Stuckey, “Christian Conversion and the Challenge of Dance,” in *Dancing Many Drums*, 39, 41.

dance enabled enslaved laborers to remember and share embodied memories of sub-Saharan pasts, they do not agree on the overall affect. Genovese asserts dancing had a “largely palliative” affect, and historians from Philip D. Morgan to David Brion Davis find “religion, music, and dancing made life ... more bearable, but they did not really change the social structures in any crucial way.”¹⁸¹

As Saidiya Hartman reminds us, disentangling the convergence of coercion in performance as labor, where performance *becomes* enslaved labor, can be challenging. She notes, “it is difficult, if not impossible, to establish an absolute and definitive division between “going before the master” and other amusements.”¹⁸² Further, “What was demanded by the master was simulated by the enslaved,” but “at the same time, the reliance on masquerade, subterfuge, and indirection also obscured the small acts of resistance conducted by the enslaved.”¹⁸³ As performers bringing forth or furnishing pleasure on behalf of spectators, enslaved persons served as sources of spectatorial pleasure.¹⁸⁴ The imagined Black dancing bodies of enslaved laborers relay knowledge about spectators, serve as records of the slaveholding class wielding “innocent amusements and spectacles of mastery” in order “to establish their dominion and regulate the little leisure allowed the

¹⁸¹ Rodreguez King-Dorset, *Black Dance in London, 1730-1850: Innovation, Tradition and Resistance* (Jefferson, North Carolina: McFarland & Company, Inc., Publishers, 2008) 114-116; Morgan, *Slave Counterpoint*, 412-420; Katrina Hazzard-Gordon *Jookin': The Rise of Social Dance Formations in African-American Culture* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1990) 22-28.

¹⁸² Saidiya V. Hartman, *Scenes of Subjection: Terror, Slavery, and Self-Making in Nineteenth-Century America* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1997) 8.

¹⁸³ Hartman, *Scenes of Subjection*, 8

¹⁸⁴ Hartman, *Scenes of Subjection*, 8.

enslaved.”¹⁸⁵ The performers and their embodied knowledges remain silenced and obscured, masked in an historiographic alloy forged in coercive spectatorships.

Enslaved persons, in particular, furnished performance and labor in the sense of “act[ing] up to one’s potential.”¹⁸⁶ They performed as part of their work, and performed the work itself. For coerced dancing, as in the torturous exercise *Dancing the Slaves*, dancing was both the work and the performance. For coerced domestic labor, the cooking and child-rearing were the work that the enslaved person performed. In both cases, the enslaved person furnished or brought forth immediate products—the dance, the food, the well-nourished child, etc. —attended by the illusion of pleasure. To be able to perform and labor with illusive pleasure while under coercion marked a peculiarly Black quality in trans-Atlantic exchanges, or the commodifiable character of sub-Saharan and African bodies. Performance and pleasure, as allowed and sourced within Early Modern archives, return us to economic legibility, reifying imagined Black dancing bodies as sources of spectatorial desire and not sub-Saharan embodied practice.

Accordingly, many scholars, from Katrina Dyonne Thompson to Eric Lott to Alexander Saxton, take documents of coerced performances to indicate Europeans projecting their own anxieties onto imagined Black bodies-in-motion.¹⁸⁷ Spectators thus effectively effaced *what happened* with what they *wanted* or *feared* to see happen. Spectator value judgments influenced the kinds of labors and dances allowed to be performed by enslaved sub-Saharans and their descendants, and the kinds of embodied practice *allowed* to be attributed to sub-Saharan-influence. The closeness of spectators, physically to the moments of performance and historiographically to the creation and

¹⁸⁵ Hartman, *Scenes of Subjection*, 8.

¹⁸⁶ Taylor, *The Archive and the Repertoire*, 4.

¹⁸⁷ Eric Lott, *Love & Theft*; KD Thompson, *Ring Shout, Wheel About*, 13-41; Saxton, “Blackface Minstrelsy,” in *Inside the Minstrel Mask*, 75.

preservation of performance facts within archives, shaped and coerced categorizations of embodied knowledge as rehearsed and routine practices from sub-Saharan regions. To place this analysis in terms of the Archimedes story, because of how Europeans and their descendants wrote and preserved descriptions of sub-Saharan performance practices, *we have no pure control* against which to assess the historiographic alloy forged through coercion and theft in an illusion of wholeness. The power of European spectatorial coercion has no sub-Saharan counter or check.

Yet, minstrelsy scholars have consistently claimed that dance, above all the practices coerced and stolen for the minstrel stage, retained a great deal of sub-Saharan, or Black, influences. Alexander Saxton explains how early minstrelsy performers, “had direct contact through their wanderings in the lower Mississippi with the music and dance of black slaves.”¹⁸⁸ Despite being “ambivalent toward the black component of their borrowings, the minstrels coveted the power and newness of the music, yet failed to recognize its Africanness.”¹⁸⁹ Minstrels sought to change their source materials “so that they would not offend refined ears,” thereby working at “the dual task of exploiting and suppressing African elements ... from the first moments of minstrelsy.”¹⁹⁰ Yet, according to Saxton, “these [African] elements possessed great vitality,” and minstrels failed to fully suppress or eliminate Black influences from the enslaved laborers who provided the songs and dances.¹⁹¹ Saxton attributes, “the popularity and staying power of minstrel freedom” to the variety of topics sketches addressed, as well as “the persistence of African borrowings (especially in dance movements and sense of rhythm).”¹⁹² In other words, blackface minstrelsy incorporated enough

¹⁸⁸ Alexander Saxton, “Blackface Minstrelsy,” in *Inside the Minstrel Mask*, 69.

¹⁸⁹ Saxton, “Blackface Minstrelsy,” in *Inside the Minstrel Mask*, 70.

¹⁹⁰ Saxton, “Blackface Minstrelsy,” in *Inside the Minstrel Mask*, 70.

¹⁹¹ Saxton, “Blackface Minstrelsy,” in *Inside the Minstrel Mask*, 70.

¹⁹² Saxton, “Blackface Minstrelsy,” in *Inside the Minstrel Mask*, 71.

Black (that is non-European) influences, particularly in the dances performed onstage, to remain both innovative and relevant within popular culture. When blackface minstrels danced, then, they furnished or brought forth sub-Saharan influences, revealing the extent of *Black* vitality which they were unable to fully mask or corrupt within their alloy.

Jacqui Malone concurs, “While early minstrelsy did involve some blendings of white and black dances, the arena in which minstrelsy showed the strongest debt to African Americans was dance.”¹⁹³ Marshall and Jean Stearns specifically assert that, “The Walk Around, the grand finale of minstrelsy ... is indebted to the Ring Shout of the Southern plantations,”¹⁹⁴ and Brenda Dixon Gottschild agrees.¹⁹⁵ Along with Marshall and Jean Stearns and Marian Hannah Winter, Gottschild further argues that one early, African American, minstrel dancer, William Henry Lane or King Juba (ca. 1825-1853), is responsible for the closeness of minstrelsy dances to sub-Saharan influences.¹⁹⁶ Gottschild names Winter as the first scholar to “give credence to the minstrel experience from an African American perspective.”¹⁹⁷ In her essay, first published in 1948, Winter names Lane as “the most influential single performer of nineteenth-century American dance.”¹⁹⁸ Further, because of Lane, “the minstrel-show dance retained more integrity as a Negro art-form than any other theatrical

¹⁹³ Malone, *Steppin’ on the Blues: The Visible Rhythms of African American Dance* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1996) 52.

¹⁹⁴ Marshall and Jean Stearns, *Jazz Dance: The Story of American Vernacular Dance* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Da Capo Press, 1994) 123.

¹⁹⁵ Brenda Dixon Gottschild, *Digging the Africanist Presence in American Performance: Dance and Other Contexts* (Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood Press, 1996) 100.

¹⁹⁶ Gottschild, *The Black Dancing Body: A Geography from Coon to Cool* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003) 110; Stearns and Stearns, *Jazz Dance*, 29, 44-48. See also Gottschild, *Digging the Africanist Presence*, 82.

¹⁹⁷ Gottschild, *Digging the Africanist Presence*, 82.

¹⁹⁸ Winter, “Juba and American Minstrelsy,” in *Inside the Minstrel Mask*, 223.

derivative of Negro culture.”¹⁹⁹ To substantiate this, Winter, and the dance scholars who follow her, cite reviews of Lane’s work by P. T. Barnum, London critics, and Charles Dickens.²⁰⁰ Sources contemporary to Juba’s time all remark on his agility and rhythmic precision through his feet and hands, innovative turns and shuffles, and capability to twist and turn his body in astounding ways. That is, in comparison to the minstrel performers dancing since the late 1820s, including but of course not limited to TD Rice’s jumps, Lane’s dancing surpassed and exceeded expectations. Lane became part of the control against which to assess the depth of minstrel performers’ coerced distortions of sub-Saharan embodied memory.

Moreover, responses to Lane’s performances located what Robert Farris (RF) Thompson and Brenda Dixon Gottschild would later term Africanist aesthetics. Since the 1960s, Black dance scholars have largely drawn on RF Thompson’s scholarship to define and qualify the gestures and steps, rhythms and routines, which comprise sub-Saharan–influenced repertoires.²⁰¹ RF Thompson undertook years of field work in West and West Central Africa in the 1960s. He drew direct connections between Yoruba, Dahomean, Kongo, Mande, and Ejagham cultures in the twentieth century to historical inheritances of sub-Saharan–descended populations throughout the Americas. He opens *Flash of the Spirit*, “Since the Atlantic slave trade, ancient African organizing principles of

¹⁹⁹ Winter, “Juba and American Minstrelsy,” in *Inside the Minstrel Mask*, 225-226.

²⁰⁰ Cockrell, *Demons of Disorder: Early Blackface Minstrels and Their World* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997) 87-89; Gottschild, *The Black Dancing Body*, 110-114; Malone, *Steppin’ on the Blues*, 53-54; Stearns and Stearns, *Jazz Dance*, 45-48.

²⁰¹ See, for example, Katrina Hazzard-Gordon, *Jookin’: The Rise of Social Dance Formations in African-American Culture* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1990); Brenda Dixon Gottschild, *Digging the Africanist Presence in American Performance*; Rodriguez King-Dorset, *Black Dance in London, 1730-1850: Innovation, Tradition and Resistance* (Jefferson, North Carolina: McFarland & Company, Inc., Publishers, 2008); Gerald E. Myers, ed. *The Black Tradition in American Dance* (Durham: American Dance Festival, 1988).

song and dance have crossed the seas from the Old World to the New.”²⁰² RF Thompson’s narrative begins with the Middle Passage. From this, he notes the music and dance practices “took on new momentum, intermingling with each other and with New World or European styles of singing and dance.”²⁰³ While RF Thompson allows for European influences on sub-Saharan communities, his work largely emphasizes African Diasporic continuities as observed and documented by him in twentieth-century West and West Central Africa.

Thompson’s principles emphasize “percussive performance style” and polyrhythmic meter. By this he means, “attack and vital aliveness in sound and motion,” as well as “competing meters sounding all at once.” The words percussive and attack indicate gestures and steps which call attention to the body of the dancer moving through space. RF Thompson forges an imagined Black dancing body as visibly *alive* in motion and movement. In his work *African Art in Motion*, for instance, Thompson notes this “concept of vital aliveness leads to the interpretation of the parts of the body as independent instruments of percussive force.”²⁰⁴ He analyzes the percussive and polyrhythmic complexity as “equal life to different body parts.”²⁰⁵ Percussive attack and aliveness work together, because for a dancing body to articulate in polyrhythmic gestures enacts liveness. Living bodies, after all, can move; thus polyrhythmic and percussive dancing enacts sub-Saharan, living bodies *in motion*. He notes specifically, “the Kongo sense of flexibility in the dance is stark: dance with bended knees,

²⁰² RF Thompson, *Flash of the Spirit: African and Afro-American Art and Philosophy* (New York: Random House, 1983) xiii.

²⁰³ RF Thompson, *Flash of the Spirit*, xiii.

²⁰⁴ RF Thompson, *African Art in Motion: Icon and Act in the Collection of Katherine Coryton White* (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1974) 9.

²⁰⁵ RF Thompson, *African Art in Motion*, 9.

lest you be taken for a corpse.”²⁰⁶ Thompson analyzes these complexities, so that his readers may begin to comprehend how “the body parts are not only independently rhythmized ... they are coherently realized within a larger dimension.”²⁰⁷ In other words, just because sub-Saharan-influenced dancing appears uncontrolled and incomprehensible does not necessarily mean it has no structure.

Within these aesthetic principles, RF Thompson further adds characteristics of, “overlapping call and response in singing,” along with “inner pulse control” and “suspended accentuation patterning.” He explains “inner pulse control” as “keeping a beat indelibly in mind as a rhythmic common denominator.” In other words, the performers and participants know and consistently maintain the beat. For “suspended accentuation patterning,” Thompson means “offbeat phrasing of melodic and choreographic accents.”²⁰⁸ Again, the multiplicity of beats, of calling and responding, may appear uncontrolled or chaotic. But, Thompson lists these principles so as to reveal “the magic act of grace” embodied through the multi-layered complexity of percussive gestures, calls and responses, and overlapping beats.²⁰⁹ Gottschild expands on RF Thompson’s work, by noting, “the percussive force of independent body parts” where “the feet may maintain one rhythm while the arms, head, or torso dance to different drums.”²¹⁰ She further relates flexibility and fluid movements to RF Thompson’s vital aliveness, in that, sub-Saharan influences manifest through a “grounded, ‘get-down’ quality ... characterized by body asymmetry (knees bent, torso slightly pitched forward)”

²⁰⁶ RF Thompson, *African Art in Motion*, 9-10.

²⁰⁷ RF Thompson, *African Art in Motion*, 9.

²⁰⁸ RF Thompson, *African Art in Motion*, 9-10.

²⁰⁹ RF Thompson, *African Art in Motion*, 7.

²¹⁰ Gottschild, *Digging the Africanist Presence*, 16, 14.

within polymetric and polyrhythmic structures.²¹¹ The imagined Black and Africanist dancing body moves in complex and layered beats and rhythms, showcasing the ranges of motion capable of being executed in relation, but not necessarily in *symmetry*, to each other.

When scholars from Winter to Gottschild take up written sources on William Lane's dancing, they find evidence of vital aliveness and percussive attack, and polyrhythmic movements and patterns. For Gottschild, the fact that Lane was able to astound his critics testifies to his capability to synthesize Africanist and Europeanist practices in a seamless whole. She describes, "we can surmise that Lane's contribution was in forging an original, innovative merger of Africanist-based torso articulations, footwork, and rhythmic syncopation with Europeanist," aesthetics from the Irish Jig to French court ballet.²¹² Based on an advertising poster with an illustration of Lane, Gottschild elaborates, how Lane exemplified "a torso that bends, torques, and leans asymmetrically pitched off-center ... in a decidedly Africanist posture."²¹³ This posture, "was alien to a Europeanist dance aesthetic based upon the vertical alignment seen in forms such as ballet, the Irish Jig, and English clog dancing."²¹⁴ Lane's dancing, in contrast, "entailed exaggerations in bending the knees and twisting and spreading the legs ... with his fabulous ball-toe-heel syncopated footwork."²¹⁵ Gottschild points to Lane's deployment of "multiple rhythms (polycentrism) and multiple meters (polymetrics)" as evidence of him using his feet as if they were drums, or the polyrhythmic percussive base for his movement.²¹⁶ For Gottschild, Lane's documented use of elaborate footwork,

²¹¹ Gottschild, *The Black Dancing Body*, 15.

²¹² Gottschild, *The Black Dancing Body*, 110.

²¹³ Gottschild, *The Black Dancing Body*, 112.

²¹⁴ Gottschild, *The Black Dancing Body*, 113.

²¹⁵ Gottschild, *The Black Dancing Body*, 112.

²¹⁶ Gottschild, *The Black Dancing Body*, 113.

polycentric and polymetric execution, as well as a torqued, or bent, posture, configures his dancing within sub-Saharan-influenced embodied practice.

Gottschild further maps Lane's imagined Black dancing body as inheriting and adapting repertoires such as the Giouba, which became Patting Juba, and the Ring Shout and buck dancing from plantation life. For Patting Juba, Gottschild draws on Jean and Marshall Stearns, who describe an "eccentric shuffle," complete with tapping of the feet, clapping of the hands, or patting the thighs.²¹⁷ Lynn Fauley Emery adds that Patting Juba usually entailed a competitive aspect. One dancer takes focus in the center of a circle, as the rest clap, pat, or tap as a chorus. A competing dancer enters the circle, adding to or enhancing what was danced previously.²¹⁸ Gottschild connects the circular formation to the Ring Shout, noting "practitioners moved in a counterclockwise direction ... while singing, chanting, and improvising." In this formation, African American congregants on plantations sang hymns, "that were embellished by African techniques of repetition and polyphony and accompanied by body percussion and rhythms on ... found objects."²¹⁹ Furthermore, to retain the Africanist significance of dancing in worship, African American congregants developed buck dancing techniques, namely, "ways to shift weight from heels to toes, to inside and outer edges of the feet, moving the feet in various directions, turning toes and knees in and out, sliding, gliding, shuffling, stomping the feet."²²⁰ In addition, "they articulated the torso and limbs in counter rhythms and different directions, adding syncopations and improvised movements throughout the body."²²¹

²¹⁷ Stearns and Stearns, *Jazz Dance*, 28; cf Morgan, *Slave Counterpoint*, 584.

²¹⁸ Emery, *Black Dance: From 1619 to Today* (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton Book Company, 1988) 29.

²¹⁹ Gottschild, *The Black Dancing Body*, 114.

²²⁰ Gottschild, *The Black Dancing Body*, 114.

²²¹ Gottschild, *The Black Dancing Body*, 114.

Throughout all of these repertoires, Gottschild emphasizes complex and multilayered percussive bases, in shuffling, tapping, or gliding of imagined Black dancing bodies. She also highlights the polycentric complexity of a torso moving independently and in relation to the rest of the body. Her descriptions evoke the call-and-response principles described by RF Thompson, in addition to the metric integrity, or “inner pulse control” necessary to execute overlapping and complex movements. Based on this extensive evidence, Gottschild identifies Lane as a proto-tap dancer, or an early innovator of the style which would come to be known as tap dance. Constance Valis Hill further explores the Europeanist contributions to tap dance, to which Gottschild alludes. Hill describes how enslaved West Africans brought the juba, a rhythmic shuffle and counterclockwise circular pattern of movement, to the Americas. So, like Gottschild and Emery, Hill centers the feet and circular floor patterns as descended from and coming out of sub-Saharan embodied practice.

Like Gottschild, Hill also composes imagined Black dancing bodies in “a style of dance that angled and relaxed the torso, centered movement in the hips, and favored flat-footed gliding, dragging, and shuffling steps.”²²² Hill depicts again the fluid and flexible, or get-down, postures as evidence of sub-Saharan origins, along with the complex percussive sounds from the feet. She directly contrasts these practices to Irish step dancing, to which Gottschild alludes, as executed “with upright torso, minimized hip motion, and dexterous footwork that favored bounding, hopping, and shuffling.”²²³ Hill composes the verticalized torso, with no fluid or polycentric flexibility. The feet in Irish Step dancing are important, but they move up, bounding or hopping, with shuffling, as well.

²²² Constance Valis Hill, *Tap Dancing American: A Cultural History* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010) 6.

²²³ Hill, *Tap Dancing America*, 6.

Moving back to Lane's body, and Gottschild's analysis, note how none of the practices ascribed to Africanist aesthetics explicitly include airborne movements. Even though Gottschild focuses exclusively on how Lane's body, as written down, evidences Africanist aesthetics, she relates polycentric and polyrhythmic execution to his torso and his percussive feet. She does not connect his agile and athletic leaps to Africanist influence, implicitly categorizing airborne movements as Europeanist embodied practice. Based on Hill's summary of West African and Irish repertoires, we further see how imagined and dancing bodies from Ireland take on hopping or bounding, as well as shuffling, while imagined and Black dancing bodies from West Africa can execute shuffling, gliding, or dragging. The imagined Black dancing body remains moving on and impacting the ground through percussive attack, in fluid and get-down relation to the earth, in flexible and polycentric complexity.

Gotschild wields these contrasting repertoires, in order to compose Lane's dancing body as the rebuttal to minstrelsy's claim on enslaved and Black authenticity. She notes, how with "his feet as percussion instruments," Lane "introduced the speed, syncopation, and sophisticated complexity of African rhythms to the white popular stage."²²⁴ His dance performance brought sub-Saharan and Africanist repertoires to minstrelsy, thereby "challenging the hegemony of white dancers who, themselves, imitated black street and plantation steps and movements in an attempt to enliven their routines."²²⁵ In other words, "Lane was the real thing," and revealed the false wholeness in minstrelsy's theft.²²⁶

In particular, Gottschild's analysis of the sources on Lane's performance contrasts heavily to the written sources describing TD Rice's Jim Crow. Recall how critics describe TD Rice waddling

²²⁴ Gottschild, *Black Dancing Body*, 110.

²²⁵ Gottschild, *Black Dancing Body*, 110.

²²⁶ Gottschild, *Black Dancing Body*, 110.

onstage,²²⁷ with an “accompanying jig and shuffle.”²²⁸ Overall, TD Rice executed a “stilted dance ... by putting on a pathetic limp and crooking his shoulder.”²²⁹ Alongside Lane’s performance of agility and percussive fluidity, TD Rice appears to have enacted a broken and halting version of enslaved embodied practice. Remember, as well, how Gottschild writes of Lane’s body from an advertising poster: in asymmetrical opposition, torqued and angled, with “exaggerations in bending the knees and twisting and spreading the legs.”²³⁰ And illustrations of Jim Crow’s body from the period likewise depict his torso as bent and angled, with his arms slanted and hands twisted out, his head cocked, and feet tilted. Further, TD Rice, like most early minstrel performers, claimed plantation authenticity. He mapped Jim Crow’s broken jumps and crooked wheeling about through imagined and enslaved Black dancing bodies. Gottschild similarly maps Lane’s dancing through plantation influences: Patting Juba, the Ring Shout, and buck dancing.

By looking at Gottschild’s analysis of Lane in relation to Jim Crow and minstrelsy, we see: if TD Rice’s Jim Crow is the original displacement of sub-Saharan influences, then William “Juba” Lane is the original re-placement of sub-Saharan embodied practice on minstrel stages. TD Rice as Jim Crow may have set the embodied precedent for broken and fabricated sub-Saharan authenticity, but Lane set the embodied precedent for transmitting Africanist aesthetics to the minstrel stage. Pushing this even further, however, the philosophical deployment of Africanist aesthetics in relation to Lane reaffirm the authenticity narratives wielded by TD Rice and early minstrel performers. That is, while both Gottschild and RF Thompson articulate wholeness in the vital attack and polyrhythmic execution of Africanist movements and rhythms, their formulation still enables Jim

²²⁷ Nevin, “Stephen C. Foster and Negro Minstrelsy,” 39.

²²⁸ Winter, “Juba and American Minstrelsy,” in *Inside the Minstrel Mask*, 225.

²²⁹ Sean Murray, “That ‘Weird and Wonderful Posture,’” 357 (357-370); cf Daphne Brooks, *Bodies in Dissent*, 17.

²³⁰ Gottschild, *Black Dancing Body*, 112.

Crow as a distorted and broken enactment of sub-Saharan influences. If William “Juba” Lane *surpassed* expectations of what it looked like to perform dances from plantation slaves, then Jim Crow, while not *excelling*, did in fact furnish or bring forth a semblance of plantation practice descended from sub-Saharan territorial pasts.

Like the water for Archimedes, Lane serves as the impartial crucible in written sources, against which to assess minstrel performers’ illusory alloy. Historiographically, both Jim Crow’s and Lane’s dancing bodies furnish or bring forth danced knowledge of plantation pasts, as coming from and descended from sub-Saharan embodied practice. Their imagined dancing bodies, as written down, preserved, and recollected for future narratives, affirm minstrelsy as a staged façade of enslaved repertoires. Lane’s body, in contrast to Jim Crow’s, relays what happened to sub-Saharan embodied practice, in that minstrel performers corrupted and exaggerated Africanist aesthetics for their working class audiences. Once again, minstrelsy remains inextricable from plantation slavery in the US, and embodied knowledge of sub-Saharan repertoires remains inextricable from coercive entertainment.

Minstrelsy generates displaced belonging, where African American performers belong in historical narratives as coming up from under silence, as constantly working to combat some version of a minstrel. When historical narratives begin, or *originate*, from within both minstrelsy and enslaved belonging, performers with sub-Saharan heritages work always already as latecomers and uninvited guests. Prior to minstrelsy, enslaved sub-Saharans and their descendants, as imagined Black bodies in historical narratives, dance under torture and to survive, they dance to remember and to resist. Resistance and remembrance in plantation performances continues, a counterpoint to visages staged in burnt cork and greasepaint. Performers with sub-Saharan heritages slowly make it to US minstrel

stages and slowly adapt popular performances away from minstrel coercions.²³¹ Always behind the scenes and offstage, African Americans create and innovate within their own communities, and then influence US popular culture through appropriated and surrogated performances.

The combined narratives of dance and theatre history silence and consign African Americans as always already late and subsequently confined to stereotypical roles. Instead of necessarily making theatrical events happen, or indeed even contributing significantly to theatrical or dance practice, African Americans enter after the event, trying to adapt and adjust, while they are allowed to develop ritual and social dancing outside of proper theater.²³² And always already, African Americans are composed in relation to – either coming out from under or resisting and deflecting – enslaved and minstrel belonging.

So, now I return to the Lopes and Pigafetta moment: “they dance and move their feet, as it were in a Moresco, with great gravetie and sobrietie.”²³³ The narrative journey of African American theatrical historical worlds begins with slavery in sub-Saharan Africa, moves across the Middle Passage, and ends up in the Americas. Imagined Black dancing bodies, as sources of knowledge for African American plantation, minstrel, and ritual belonging, move through trans-Atlantic space and time, both coerced and resisting, both tortured and creating community. Lopes and Pigafetta’s

²³¹ See, for example, Louis Chude-Sokei, *The Last “Darky”: Bert Williams and Black-on-Black Minstrelsy, and the African Diaspora* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2005).

²³² Dayla Alberge and Mike Brown, “Actor Janet Suzman Criticized for Calling Theatre ‘A White Invention,’” in *The Guardian*, Dec 8, 2014, <https://www.theguardian.com/stage/2014/dec/08/actor-janet-suzman-criticised-calling-theatre-white-invention>.

²³³ Duarte Lopes and Filippo Pigafetta, “A report of the Kingdome of Congo, a region of Affrica,” in *Purchas his Pilgrimes ...*, trans. Abraham Hartwell and ed. Samuel Purchas, Vol. 2, bk 7, chap IIII [sic], 986-1026 (London: Printed by William Stansby for Henrie Fetherstone, 1625) 1018–1019.

record does not imply or allude to a moment of coercive entertainment, wherein Black bodies perform at the behest of European spectators. Given the prevailing narratives in African American theatre and dance, the Kongo court performance *may* fit *if* I argued that Lopes coerced the Kongolese into performing a moresca.

In specific relation to the Kongo, and dance practices moving from West Central Africa to the Americas, Atlantic historians have identified common characteristics in that region. In Georges Balandier's history of the Kongo kingdom, he draws on Lopes and Pigafetta; but he ignores and does not address the mention of a moresca. Instead, he asserts, "Dancing rarely took place for pleasure alone." He notes dancing took place "within the framework of ritual dramas," as in, calling on or honoring ancestral spirits during specific rites.²³⁴ Both Balandier and John Thornton mention war dances or mock combat sequences in Kongo. Thornton describes it as sanga, "a means of training in and maintaining the skills necessary for hand-to-hand fighting, and involved dancing with weapons in hand."²³⁵ Thornton locates South American combat dances, such as capoeira, within trans-Atlantic Kongo influences. He notes further sources on dances like the paracombé, with sensual movements centered within the hips, in both South America and West Central Africa.²³⁶

James Sweet follows a Kimbundu rite, ulundu or calundu, from West Central African ritual to Brazilian. He notes wild and disjointed movements, which European spectators took to indicate

²³⁴ Balandier, *Daily Life in the Kingdom of the Kongo from the Sixteenth to the Eighteenth Century* (London: George Allen and Unwin, Ltd, 1968) 232-233.

²³⁵ Thornton, *A Cultural History of the Atlantic World, 1250-1820* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012) 394.

²³⁶ Thornton, *A Cultural History of the Atlantic World, 1250-1820*, 395-396.

possession by an ancestral spirit.²³⁷ Sweet also includes detailed descriptions of counterclockwise circling motions around the one possessed, linking this formation to the Caribbean calenda, vodun, and the Ring Shout in the United States.²³⁸ Robert Farris Thompson later locates the Petró-Lemba aspect of Haitian vodun within Kongo origins. He explains Petró as “ritualized aggression” from “spiritualized militancy” in West Central Africa.²³⁹ In his history of the tango, Thompson lists several more characteristics of Kongo dancing. He includes polyrhythmic and percussive movements and rhythms, as well as “overlapping call-and-response dancing.” To these, he adds: line or circle formations, dancing without touching or embracing, sexual or “hot dancing,” and “the supreme spiritual expression in Kongo dancing mayembo (ecstatic trembling of the shoulders).”²⁴⁰ Thompson further notes competitive mock battles in a ring, and “the Kongo custom of using dance as an equivalent to close-order drill in the training of young soldiers,” including “to duck (sanguka), to twist (zeka), and to parry, to avoid being stationary.”²⁴¹ And Thompson, although he cites Lopes and Pigafetta for mock combat, does not mention the moresca at Kongo court.

Overall, these scholars portray the Kongolese and their exiled descendants, as imagined Black dancing bodies engaging in hand-to-hand mock combat and athletic movements and rhythms. They also note sensual and ecstatic movements, as well as circular formations. Based on these scholars, the Kongo court performance may qualify as an event within West Central Africa to circulation in the Caribbean and South America. It would do so based on the implications of

²³⁷ James Sweet, “The Evolution of Ritual in the African Diaspora,” in *Diasporica Africa: A Reader*, ed. Michael A. Gomez, 64-80 (New York: New York University Press, 2006) 64-65.

²³⁸ James Sweet, “The Evolution of Ritual in the African Diaspora,” in *Diasporica Africa: A Reader*, 72-75.

²³⁹ RF Thompson, *Flash of the Spirit*, 180.

²⁴⁰ RF Thompson, *Tango: The Art History of Love* (New York: Pantheon Books, 2005) 64-66.

²⁴¹ RF Thompson, *Tango*, 66-67.

moresca as a mock combat exercise, and of an interdependence with warlike and combat dances already included in historical narratives of Kongolese trans-Atlantic influences. Lopes and Pigafetta, then, would fit as a source of European spectators witnessing mock combat dancing, and comparing it to its closest European equivalent.

Notice how both of these options include knowledge of the moresca resting with the European spectators and writers. In both scenarios, Lopes and Pigafetta transpose European movements and rhythms onto West Central African dancers, narrating or composing imagined Black dancing bodies in ways understood by their European readers. Within longstanding trans-Atlantic histories of European coercion, the Lopes and Pigafetta transposition could further belong as an appropriation and misinterpretation of West Central African dancing, according to Lopes and Pigafetta *wanting* the dances to conform into European ideals of danced repertoires and rhythms.

Yet, does placing this performance event into narratives ending in the Caribbean and South America also qualify it within narratives of African American theatre and dance? Jamestown records do not indicate violence or mock combat enacted by or coming from the West Central Africans sold to John Rolfe. We also have no sources on coerced dancing for the West Central Africans sold to John Rolfe in 1619. When the enslaved captives were sold to John Rolfe, their sale is recorded as one of indenture. Some of them, like Anthony and Isabella, appear as Christians, married, and with a child baptized into the Anglican faith. Others, like Angelo, appear enslaved to Captain William Pierce, John Rolfe's father-in-law.²⁴² We don't know if they danced or sang under coercion. We don't know if they participated in or remembered rituals from Kongo or Nsundi practices. And yet, their bodies are in transit, from West Central African capture, sale to Portuguese, capture by Dutch

²⁴² Helen Tunnicliff Catterall, *Judicial Cases Concerning American Slavery and the Negro*, Vol 1 (Washington, D. C.: Carnegie Institute of Washington, 1926) 55-57.

privateers, and purchase by English colonists establishing tobacco plantations to turn a profit in the New World. For both of these early locations of sources on West Central Africans, the Kongo court and Jamestown, we have no traces of coerced dancing. Does this mean that West Central Africans, noble and enslaved, in the southeastern and northwestern Atlantic, do not belong within historical narratives of African American theatre?

An early Jamestown source by Alexander Whitaker, from 1611, records indigenous Americans “dauncinge like Anticks or our morris dancers.”²⁴³ Does this further substantiate Lopes and Pigafetta *wanting* Kongolese dances to conform into European ideals of danced repertoires? Does this suggest, in the seventeenth century, that European travelers and spectators did not yet know how to classify and record danced repertoires as evidence of geographic belonging? That sub-Saharan dances had not yet *become* Black and indigenous American dances had not yet *become* Red? And so, in order to evoke imagined difference for their readers, European travelers and writers related imagined dancing bodies from sub-Saharan Africa and the Americas with a dance, which in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries was “historically *perceived* to be related” to Moorishness?²⁴⁴ But, what if we tried to *imagine* how Lopes and Pigafetta *might* have witnessed a moresca at the Kongo court? If we *imagine* how West Central African dancers *may* have known how to dance a moresca in the late sixteenth century?

²⁴³ Qotd in Malcolm Gaskill, *Between Two Worlds: How the English Became Americans* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014) 29-30.

²⁴⁴ Forrest, *The History of Morris Dancing, 1458-1750* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1999) 5-6, 366.

STAGING IMAGINED BODIES, OR SUBJUNCTIVE BELONGING

Inquiring into the process of producing a historical narrative is also fundamentally, an exploration of a staged composition involving *imagined* bodies moving through time and space. As maps of what happened, historical narratives enable and foreclose our imagination on embodied transfers of knowledge. How we imagine bodies as sources, how we imagine dancing bodies as sources of knowledge and events, draws on our understanding of how people moved and interacted with each other over long periods of time. In this section, I am correlating Trouillot's process of narrative production to a process of staging or composing bodies on a physical stage. In doing so, I am asking us to map and visualize presence, so as to call attention to the contingencies of silence and absence built into historical narratives. I want us to imagine where and when danced performances happened, in order to visualize the silences built into narrated and composed historical worlds. I use the language of composition, in terms of composing or choreographing imagined dancing bodies, as a strategy to highlight the creation of spatial relationships in motion, that is, the wielding of presence and absence to evoke dancing bodies moving and interacting over space and time. Specifically, I examine the Lopes and Pigafetta moresca in relation to how European-focused scholarship on the moresca and morris map imagined dancing bodies.

In historical narratives, to analyze repertoires within embodied practice means to examine how sources, archives, and narratives compose or choreograph imagined dancing bodies into particular movements and rhythms, and within particular times and spaces. Part of the reason I could, at the end of the previous section, map Kongolese dance practices into trans-Atlantic exchange, is because African Diasporic narratives of performance have always already mapped coercive dispersal along the slave shipping routes in the Atlantic Ocean. We have already mapped and imagined West Central Africans into trans-Atlantic shipping routes. In history after history,

narrative after narrative, we have always already traveled from African shores, across the Atlantic, to the Americas. Mapping imagined Black dancing bodies along these routes opens up strategies of transmission, in everyday interactions, but does not necessarily open up routes of development or transmission, over spaces and times usually excluded in narratives of Early Modern sub-Saharan and their descendants. As Trouillot notes, “Each historical narrative renews a claim to truth.”²⁴⁵ The process of producing historical narratives also produces claims on the truths of *how* people moved, voluntarily or coerced, *where* they moved, from location to location, and *when* they did so.

To imagine dancing bodies carrying knowledge of the past towards the future relates the process of writing history to the process of composing choreography. Foster notes, “Both choreographer and historian ... as part of their working process, construct an imagined dancing body that ... incorporates many techniques, many desires.”²⁴⁶ Choreographers imagine dancing bodies prior to and within rehearsals. By mapping imagined bodies into kinaesthetic expressions of dancers, choreographers relate their imagined compositions to phrases and gestures in performance. Foster reveals how *imagining* dancing bodies happens prior to and alongside of composing dance for the performance stage and historical page. Just as a choreographer arranges bodies onstage, historians arrange dancing bodies on the page. Put another way, both choreography and history imagine movement through temporal locations; they establish and narrate “the arrangement of bodily movement in time and space.”²⁴⁷ Our narratives of history, of how people moved from place to place, interacted and changed events or each other, necessarily follows our understanding of how

²⁴⁵ Trouillot, *Silencing the Past*, 6.

²⁴⁶ Susan Leigh Foster, *Choreography & Narrative: Ballet's Staging of Story and Desire* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1996) 11.

²⁴⁷ Scolieri, “Global/Mobile: Re-orienting Dance and Migration Studies,” in *Dance Research Journal*, 40:2(Winter 2008): vi.

people physically lived. In dance history, narratives follow our understanding of how people danced with and in front of each other, across oceans and continents, on dance floors and dancing grounds. Furthermore, since danced repertoires bring forth or furnish embodied memories, imagined dancing bodies serve as sources of past interactions or exchanges. Historians use repertoires as evidence of embodied memory in common and in motion, to tell us where certain steps, postures, and rhythms came from and how they traveled. By composing imagined dancing bodies within and from certain places and times, historians tell us where and when a performer learned a particular series of steps and movements, rhythms and gestures. Imagined dancing bodies remember and transmit past knowledges into historical futures.

Part of the question I've been pursuing throughout this case study, is how do we already know the *moresca* as a danced repertoire in pan-European embodied practice? In the last section, I closed by describing how we already know those danced repertoires which qualify and belong within Kongolese embodied practice. Here, I'm thinking through, how do we know the *moresca* belongs to and originates from within Europe? That imagined dancing bodies from Europe are already qualified as sources for this dance? Scholars, to begin, do not approach the *morris* or *moresca* by explicitly claiming European origins. Instead, they disclaim external influences or origins. In other words, based on a *lack* of sources pointing to specific performance events as exchanges with cultures outside of Europe, scholars from Jennifer Nevile to John Forrest, all define their scope as continentally and geographically European.

Both Jennifer Nevile and Claire Sponsler note the challenges in assigning an origin to the moresca or morris.²⁴⁸ Nevile observes,

the conflation of accounts from Northern Europe with those from Italy, as well as accounts of moresche performed by members of the elite as opposed to performances by artisans and craftsmen, has led to confusion regarding the origins of this dance type, and a misunderstanding as to its significance and what it symbolized.²⁴⁹

In other words, sources from multiple locations in medieval and Renaissance Europe do not point to a single origin or descent for this dance, which is alternately named as morris, moresque, or moresca. Subsequently, scholars also cannot agree on from where and when this dance originated, just that the dance circulated extensively, with varying names and formats, throughout most of western Europe, beginning in the fifteenth century. The rehearsed routines and remembered and embodied knowledges recorded as the moresca do not reveal or reflect any particular geographic point of origin. The moresca and morris belong to Europe, broadly construed.

In both Italy and Portugal, sources on moresche and mourisca, respectively, reach back to fifteenth century aristocratic performances.²⁵⁰ Barbara Sparti notes morescas were recorded during interludes, either at banquets or plays, and including wild men with beards, as well as swords and

²⁴⁸ Sponsler, "Writing the Unwritten: Morris Dance and Theatre History," in *Representing the Past: Essays in Performance Historiography*, eds., Charlotte M. Canning and Thomas Postlewait, 84-113 (Iowa City: University of Iowa, 2010).

²⁴⁹ Nevile, "Decorum and Desire," in *Renaissance Quarterly* 68:2 (Sum 2015): 597.

²⁵⁰ For Portugal records, see Violet Alford, "Morris and Morisca" in *Journal of the English Folk Dance and Song Society* 2 (1935): 41-49.

mock combat, in allegorical or exotic scenes.²⁵¹ Katherine McGinnis qualifies, a moresca, “could be a theatrical event, requiring professional choreography, and often, professional performers,” as well as in performance exchanges between nobles.²⁵² Nevile finds evidence of moresche at public festivals, like carnival, and elaborates:

The characteristics of moresche in fifteenth-century Italy included danced combat and other pantomime dancing, including the depiction of agricultural work, exotic characters such as wild men, allegorical figures such as vices and virtues, and mythological figures such as Hercules and centaurs. The performers were often masked or had their faces blackened, and their costumes were usually made of silk or other precious fabrics. It is worth noting that whether the dancers engaged in combat with swords and shields or mimed agricultural activities such as sowing or harvesting, their actions were always in time with the music.²⁵³

A moresca could entail a wide variety of dance steps and floor patterns, characters and costumes. Nobles and court dance masters performed in moresche, in front of visiting royalty, and dance masters also choreographed moresche for public festivals. As the merchant class increased, dancing schools taught clientele the latest fashions and dances at court, including the moresca, galliard, and others.²⁵⁴ Overall, Nevile notes moresche featured, “elaborate stage shows with sumptuous costumes

²⁵¹ Katherine Tucker McGinnis, “Moving in High Circles; Courts, Dance, and Dancing Masters in Italy in the Long Sixteenth Century,” (PhD diss., University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, 2001) 170-173.

²⁵² McGinnis, “Moving in High Circles,” 171.

²⁵³ Nevile, *The Eloquent Body: Dance and Humanist Culture in Fifteenth-Century Italy* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2004) 33-34.

²⁵⁴ Nevile, *Eloquent Body*, 25. See also Eugene McDowell Kenley, “Sixteenth-century matachines dances: morescas of mock combat and comic pantomime,” (PhD diss., Stanford, 1993) 1-2, 5-8, 11-12, 16-19, 30, 33-36, 53.

and opportunities for display.”²⁵⁵ She further argues that nobility staged moresche for public and communal rituals of power, in that the form of the moresche allowed noble courts to reveal they were not exotic, wild, or barbaric.”²⁵⁶ In all of the sources examined by Nevile, she finds little to no evidence of influences external to Europe. By looking at McGinnis’s work, as well, Italian moresca events *happened* repeatedly in: noble weddings and betrothals, noble sponsorship of Italian vernacular theatre, Carnival processions, and dance schools.

John Forrest analyzes the two theories of origin in specific relation to the English morris dance. The earliest theory, “a mainstay of dictionaries and commentaries from the mid-seventeenth century onwards,” held that the morris came from the morisco, a Spanish version of a Moroccan dance.²⁵⁷ In the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, however, folklore scholars argued the morris originated within pagan rituals in the British Isles.²⁵⁸ Forrest introduces and analyzes these theories, ultimately discarding them as implausible based on the available sources, and defines his focus on “how morris dances have evolved and developed over the centuries.”²⁵⁹ He concludes, that the “morris has no single origin” and “morris is not and never has been a simple or single phenomenon.”²⁶⁰ He proceeds to systematically list and categorize the data on morris dances in English records, from the locations of recorded performances, to the costumes and participants, and map overlapping patterns of diffusion. Moreover, by considering Italian sources and English sources, Forrest claims some “family resemblances” for identifying and following morris dances and

²⁵⁵ Nevile, *Eloquent Body*, 33.

²⁵⁶ Nevile, *Eloquent Body*, 47.

²⁵⁷ Forrest, *The History of Morris Dancing*, 6.

²⁵⁸ Forrest, *The History of Morris Dancing*, 8-24.

²⁵⁹ Forrest, *The History of Morris Dancing*, xv.

²⁶⁰ Forrest, *The History of Morris Dancing*, 27.

moresche in sources: “high leaping, fighting, mimed action, ... dancing in a circle or around the room, rhythmic stepping, beating time with implements, and the use of dancing bells.”²⁶¹ From Forrest’s work, English morris events *happened* repeatedly in: the Tudor court, urban processions in southern English towns and cities, in rural parishes, and briefly on the Elizabethan and Jacobean stage. Overall, he maps a fluid, yet indeterminate, model of circulation and exchange between Italy and England, while including sources from northern Europe, like Bruges.

Max Harris diverges from the continental scope taken by Nevile and Forrest, in that he mentions moresca as part of and contained within the larger context of moros y cristianos.²⁶² He treats moros y cristianos as theatrical spectacles of mock combat, with dancing as a central aspect of the narrative and celebratory feasting. Moros y cristianos were staged large-scale, multi-day battles or sieges, with an initial Christian loss to set up the eventual Christian victory. Performed battle sequences could include battles with fruit as weapons, juegos de cañas (Games of Canes), and dances like the moresca. Due to the wave of sources documenting moros y cristianos events after 1492, Harris explores the role of trans-Atlantic exchange in influencing development of moros y cristiano, and its attendant mock combat dancing. Harris locates preceding influences as far as the tenth century, in staged re-enactments from Byzantium to Paris. In re-enacted, mock battles in fourteenth century Paris, for instance, Harris notes the use of “complex scenic devices.” These performances had “wheeled castles, ships, pavilions, and rocks,” as well as “elaborate fireworks displays to simulate gunfire and explosions.”²⁶³ But, he disqualifies these earlier sources as evidence of

²⁶¹ Forrest, *The History of Morris Dancing*, 74.

²⁶² Harris, *Aztecs, Moors, and Christians: Festivals of Reconquest in Mexico and Spain* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2000) 200, 229-231.

²⁶³ Harris, *Aztecs, Moors, Christians*, 41.

moros y cristianos events, based on either a lack of integrated dancing or lack of a clear Moors versus Christians framework.

Some of the earliest moros y cristianos, with both festive combat and dancing, occurred in Corpus Christi processions in thirteenth and fourteenth century Aragón-Catalunya.²⁶⁴ He claims both “courtly and ecclesiastical provenance” for the recorded moros y cristianos, but cautions, “we should not ... seek a single aristocratic origin, for we are not dealing with a formally prescribed genre but with a theme that can be adapted to a variety of forms.”²⁶⁵ Overall, however, Harris argues, “there are too few known accounts of mock battles between Moors and Christians in medieval Spain for us to speak of an already long-established tradition at the time of the conquest of America.”²⁶⁶ Accordingly, Harris then examines indigenous Mexica sources for evidence of mock combat and staged battles in performance. By correlating re-enactments and dancing in Iberia to dances of mock combat in indigenous Mexica communities, Harris argues, we get complex and sometimes contradictory meanings based in trans-Atlantic exchanges of moros y cristianos.

Out of all the regions represented here, only Max Harris deals directly with the question of Moorish presence in Europe, and the presence of indigenous Americans in Europe. Both Forrest and Nevile address the seventeenth century claim on the morris and moresca as a Moorish dance practice. They both also conclude Moors had little to no influence on the dancing, either in origins or in development, regardless of what the etymology may suggest.²⁶⁷ They explicitly restrict their analysis to imagined dancing bodies within and from Italy and northern Europe. Both Forrest and Nevile invite their readers to imagine the dance enclosed within European borders, in courts and

²⁶⁴ Harris, *Aztecs, Moors, Christians*, 37-53.

²⁶⁵ Harris, *Aztecs, Moors, and Christians*, 61.

²⁶⁶ Harris, *Aztecs, Moors, and Christians*, 61.

²⁶⁷ Nevile, *Eloquent Body*, 197 fn 93; Forrest, *The History of Morris Dancing*, 6-7.

jousting tournaments, and then eventually in dancing schools and public festivals. Harris makes a similar qualification, in that he notes performers who dress as Moors. But, Harris also attends to the appearance of sources in relation to the Spanish Reconquista and then in relation to the Spanish Americas.

I will elaborate on this map in greater detail in the next chapter. Right now, based on the combined work of these scholars, the narrative of the *moresca* and *morris*, as a group of dance practices with “family resemblances,” takes place nearly entirely within European borders before moving out to the Americas or other locations. This remains true for Harris’s work, as well. Because by placing Harris in conversation with scholarship focused solely on *morris* and *moresca*, enough sources point to noble *moresche* or *morris* performances in both Italy and England to suggest the dance itself circulated widely prior to the stabilization of *moros y cristianos*. In other words, even though Harris argues for *moros y cristianos* emerging from trans-Atlantic exchange, the athletic dancing of the *moresca-morris*, which was suggestive of combat, appears frequently and repeatedly in sources from English and Italian courts in the fifteenth century.

Given that scholars of the *moresca* and *morris* include leaping and mock combat, and that scholars of Kongolese embodied practice also include leaping and mock combat, then the Lopes and Pigafetta source *may* fit as transposing European practices onto imagined Black dancing bodies. The interdependence of previously written histories of the *moresca* and *morris* influences how we can qualify a source like Lopes and Pigafetta into a performance event in the Kongo court. The “previously established facts” surrounding leaping, mock combat, and the *moresca* create the parameters of authority and credibility for Kongolese dancers to carry or transmit knowledge of the *moresca* or a *moresca*-like dance in West Central Africa. To elaborate on the implications of staging historical compositions through imagined dancing bodies, let’s correlate European focused scholarship on the *moresca* within a map, and as Trouillot says, “let the silences speak.”

All of the scholars qualify mock combat dancing in aristocratic and noble European settings beginning from at least the fifteenth century. Harris goes back as far as thirteenth- and fourteenth-century Aragón-Catalunya. All of these scholars, either explicitly or implicitly, disqualify imagined Moorish dancing bodies from participating in, influencing, or contributing to the *moresca* or *morris*. They do so, even without analyzing sources on Moorish or Muslim or Arabic performance practices in Europe, North Africa, and the Middle East and Central Asia. Their narratives presume an archive built from European-language documents on what dance means and how dance history happens, and the kinds of imagined bodies qualified to tell us “what happened” and “that which is said to have happened.” Harris’s archives diverge somewhat from this model, because he includes indigenous American sources and imagined indigenous dancing bodies. But the dance as analyzed by these scholars and as happening across Europe prior to 1492, does not point to Muslim–Christian or European–Asian or European–North-African exchanges.

Nor does the dance, as analyzed by these scholars, point to any exchange across the Sahara Desert into sub-Saharan Africa. Sub-Saharan regions are one of the locations which the *moresca* and *morris* *do not* travel either to or from. Because just as these scholars do not attend to Arabic-scripted sources or European-language sources on Moorish or Muslim practices, these scholars also do not attend to sub-Saharan presence throughout Europe. In both Italy and England, the very first sources on *moresca* and *morris*, respectively, occur in 1455 and 1458, which is *after* the Portuguese began slave raiding down the coast of West Africa in the early fifteenth century. Going further, the Iberian peninsula, as linked within Islamic trade routes, had received “a small but relatively constant supply

of African slaves” since at least the ninth century CE.²⁶⁸ And cities in Italy had hosted official visits from Ethiopian representatives since at least the eleventh century CE.²⁶⁹

It is therefore not *impossible* to *imagine* sub-Saharan Africans as present, at the very least, in audiences for early European morris or moresca performances, even reaching back to thirteenth-century Aragón-Catalunya. To be clear, I am not claiming only sub-Saharan heritages for enslaved populations in medieval or Renaissance or Early Modern Europe. I am also not claiming that slavery, in these time periods, resembled or equaled what would happen in the Americas. Indeed, as many scholars show, enslaved communities of varying heritages claimed and facilitated manumission in a variety of ways.²⁷⁰ I am claiming, rather, a failure of imagining subjunctively, who *could* have been there and who *may* have been there. Because sub-Saharan Africans also appear quite frequently in European noble and aristocratic contexts beginning in the fifteenth century, including but not limited to, domestic servants in the three families dominating early Italian sources on moresca performances: d’Este, d’Aragona (Aragón house from northeastern Spain), and Sforza.²⁷¹ In

²⁶⁸ William D. Phillips, *Slavery from Roman Times to the Early Transatlantic Trade* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1985) 154.

²⁶⁹ Salvatore, “The Ethiopian Age of Exploration: Prester John’s Discovery of Europe, 1306-1458,” in *Journal of World History* 21:4 (2011): 593-627.

²⁷⁰ Nelson H. Minnich, “The Catholic Church and the Pastoral Care of Black Africans in Renaissance Italy,” in *Black Africans in Renaissance Europe*, eds., T. F. Earle and K. J. P. Lowe, 280-300 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005) 284.

²⁷¹ Paul H. D. Kaplan, “Isabella d’Este and Black African Women,” in *Black Africans in Renaissance Europe*, 125-154; Annemarie Jordan, “Images of Empire: Slaves in the Lisbon Household and Court of Catherine of Austria,” in *Black Africans in Renaissance Europe*, 155-180.

England, John Blanke served as a trumpeter under Henry VII and Henry VIII.²⁷² And a sub-Saharan African drummer appears in 1505 Edinburgh to choreograph the Shrovetide celebration for King James IV, which, as we will see was one of the common festivals in which a morris was performed.²⁷³ It is also therefore not *impossible to imagine* sub-Saharan Africans as present and influencing the fifteenth- and sixteenth-century wave of sources on morris and moresca in continental Europe.

More specifically, in relation to our Lopes and Pigafetta example, both men lived in southern European locations with communities of sub-Saharan Africans and performances ascribed to sub-Saharan influences. Duarte Lopes, for instance, grew up in and came from Évora, Portugal, the location of the Royal Palace. Between 1533 and 1538, the Royal Court hosted Nicholas Cleynaerts from northern Europe. Cleynaerts commented on “the existence of Black Africans – above all slaves – who were so abundant” and appeared to outnumber the rest of the Portuguese population.²⁷⁴ Upon his marriage to Queen Catherine of Austria, were several enslaved laborers, including a pastry chef, instrumentalists, and dancers.²⁷⁵ The Portuguese court also hosted a variety of scholars, entertainers, and writers, including Gil Vicente. Vicente wrote plays including characters speaking

²⁷² Imtiaz Habib, *Black Lives in the English Archives, 1500-1677: Imprints of the Invisible* (Hampshire: Ashgate Publishing Limited, 2008) 2, 39-40.

²⁷³ Imtiaz Habib, *Black Lives in the English Archives*, 29-30.

²⁷⁴ Jorge Fonseca, “Black Africans in Portugal during Cleynaerts’s Visit,” in *Black Africans in Renaissance Europe*, 113-114.

²⁷⁵ Annemarie Jordan, “Images of Empire: Slaves in the Lisbon Household and Court of Catherine of Austria,” in *Black Africans in Renaissance Europe*, 156-159 (155-180); mourisca referred to on 158. Jordan also describes how their court jester, João de Sá Panseco, though not enslaved, had sub-Saharan heritages and was spurned by the Portuguese court (160-161).

fala dos negros, or a dialect categorized as Black approximation of Portuguese speech.²⁷⁶ Prior to his departure, Lopes could have already witnessed dance performances by sub-Saharan Africans and theatrical performances ascribed to sub-Saharan heritages by Portuguese poets.²⁷⁷ Pigafetta, as well, would not have been isolated from knowledge of sub-Saharan Africans and performances in Italy. In northern Italian courts, around the turn of the sixteenth century, it became “fashionable” for ruling noble women, like Isabella d’Este, to own and display enslaved women as their attendants and domestic laborers.²⁷⁸ Since the end of the fifteenth century in Italy, it had also become common to feature one of the Magi as Black.²⁷⁹ Venice, as well, had a significant community of free, Black gondoliers.²⁸⁰

Thus, in order to disqualify and silence this Kongo court performance out of African Diasporic narratives of performance history, we also have to overlook and silence the proximity of Lopes and Pigafetta to Afro-European exchanges in both southern Europe and West Central Africa.

²⁷⁶ Jeremy Lawrence, “Black Africans in Renaissance Spanish Literature,” in *Black Africans in Renaissance Europe*, 70-93; Natalie Operstein, “Golden Age *Poesía de Negros* and Orlando di Lasso’s *Moresche*: A Possible Connection,” in *Romance Notes* 52:1 (2012): 13-18; P. E. Russell, “Towards an Interpretation of Rodrigo de Reinosa’s *Poesía Negra*,” in *Studies in Spanish Literature of the Golden Age Presented to Edward M. Wilson*, ed. R. O. Jones, 225-245 (London: Tamesis, 1973); Natalie Vodovozova, “A Contribution to the History of the *Villancico de Negros*,” (Master’s Thesis, University of British Columbia, 1996); Frida Weber de Kurlat, “El tipo de negro en el teatro de Lope de Vega: Tradición y Creación,” in *Actas II* (1965): 695-704.

²⁷⁷ Some historians place Lopes as a slave trader, see Ernst van den Boogaart, “Slavery in the De Bry Collection,” in *Migration, Trade, and Slavery in an Expanding World: Essays in Honor of Pieter Emmer*, ed., Wim Klooster, 165-196 (Leiden: Koninklijke Brill NV, 2009) 173.

²⁷⁸ Paul H. D. Kaplan, “Isabella d’Este and Black African Women,” in *Black Africans in Renaissance Europe*, 125.

²⁷⁹ Paul H. D. Kaplan, “Isabella d’Este and Black African Women,” in *Black Africans in Renaissance Europe*, 127.

²⁸⁰ Paul H. D. Kaplan, “Isabella d’Este and Black African Women,” in *Black Africans in Renaissance Europe*, 135.

In addition, Catholic confraternities of sub-Saharan Africans also existed in Portugal, since the fifteenth century. Jeroen Dewulf has convincingly argued for Afro-Iberian influence in confraternity and king performances throughout West Central Africa, and in North and South America.²⁸¹ A critical aspect of his argument is that West Central Africans had developed Afro-Catholic practices prior to trans-Atlantic encounters. Therefore, Lopes could also have potentially observed the Kongo court, as a political entity recognized and treated as such by European powers,²⁸² shifting and adapting European dances prior to and alongside the overwhelming impact of European coercions related to trans-Atlantic slavery. We do not have to map *coercion* into this source, in order to *imagine* Black dancing bodies executing steps similar to and perhaps adapted from the *moresca*.

When we also consider the volatility of racialized terms in this era, namely the slippage between Black, Moor, Ethiopian, and Negro, a relationship between *moresca* and continental Africa also appears *possible*, at least to the extent of exploring this question further. As Imtiaz Habib shows, to write *more* or *moren* in fifteenth- and sixteenth-century Scots meant “a black individual” with sub-Saharan heritages.²⁸³ In fifteenth-century Italy, as well, “The term *mauro* or *moro* could denote an Arab or Berber, but also an Ethiopian or sub-Saharan Black ... The term *Aethiops* was similarly ambiguous.”²⁸⁴ Fuchs likewise observes, how Moor “could refer to both light- and dark-skinned people, to Muslims in Spain as well as in North Africa, and even occasionally to Turks or sub-

²⁸¹ Jeroen Dewulf, “Black Brotherhoods in North America: Afro-Iberian and West-Central African Influences,” in *African Studies Quarterly* 15:3 (June 2015): 19-38.

²⁸² Herman Bennett, “Soiled Gods: Displinary and the African-European Encounter in the Fifteenth Century,” (typescript, forthcoming) 1.

²⁸³ Habib, *Black Lives in the English Archives*, 27-37.

²⁸⁴ Nelson H. Minnich, “The Catholic Church and the Pastoral Care of Black Africans in Renaissance Italy,” in *Black Africans in Renaissance Europe*, 282.

Saharan peoples.”²⁸⁵ A mid-sixteenth century English traveler recorded this equivalency when describing, “the kingdom of Guinea, with Senega, Jalofo, Gambra, and many other regions of the Blacke Moores, called Aethiopians or negros, all which are watered with the river Negro called in old time Niger.”²⁸⁶ Going even further, both de Marees and Jobson connect mock combat festivities with dancing practices in West Africa. De Marees described, “Warriors who accompany the Nobleman and fence and jump with one another,”²⁸⁷ while Jobson noted, “when the men dance, they doe it with their swords naked in their hands.”²⁸⁸

But, I want to note how I have continued to relate sub-Saharan influences through and within enslavement, *and* through European writers or performers. At this point, if I were to argue for the moresca or morris as evidence of sub-Saharan influence in Europe, I might end up with an argument similar to that of Robert Hornback in “‘Extravagant and Wheeling Strangers’: Early Blackface Dancing Fools, Racial Impersonation, and the Limits of Identification.” Hornback frames his argument as an intervention, “challenging the assumption that the minstrel stereotype was a

²⁸⁵ Fuchs, “The Spanish Race,” in *Rereading the Black Legend: The Discourses of Religious and Racial Difference in the Renaissance Empires*, eds. Margaret R. Greer, Walter D. Mignolo, and Maureen Quilligan, 88-98 (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2007) 88.

²⁸⁶ “A voiage made out of England unto Guinea and Benin in Affrike, at the charges of certaine marchants Adventurers of the Citie of London in the yeere of our Lord 1553,” in *The Principal Navigations Voyages Traffiques & Discoveries of the English Nation*, Vol 6 (New York: AMS Press, Inc. 1965) 143.

²⁸⁷ De Marees, *Description and Historical Account of the Gold Kingdom of Guinea (1602)*, transl. and eds. Albert van Dantzig and Adam Jones (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1982) 167-170.

²⁸⁸ Jobson, *The Discovery of River Gambra (1623)*, eds. David P. Gamble and P.E.H. Hair (1-72) (London: The Hakluyt Society, 1999) 152.

uniquely American invention.”²⁸⁹ He configures Jim Crow in a genealogy of “blackface dancing fools” from English Morris dancers to blackface drolls (often based on jigs) to Mungo in eighteenth-century plays, *The Padlock* and *Harlequin Mungo*. He argues, Renaissance performers like the “Shakespearean actor Will Kemp” attained popular success “while dancing in some variant of blackface.”²⁹⁰

Hornback relates the practice of blacking up to specific fool types, “devils, colliers, blacksmiths, blacking polish salesman, butts of on-stage blacking episodes, blackfaced fools, and Moors,” in the sixteenth century. Based on this, he claims “widespread early blackface traditions had at least *some* influence upon subsequent ones” in the United States, and “the supposedly “innovative” minstrel stereotype of inherent irrationality, foolishness, idleness, and lustfulness was founded upon the survival of a much older dancing blackfaced clown type.”²⁹¹ In other words, Hornback argues for a longer history of European-descended performers taking on and distorting a semblance of sub-Saharan dance repertoires. The interdependence of minstrel-like coercion thus exerts a “field of power” and defines previous eras within a historical landscape of displacement and illusory wholeness.

Hornback further claims, “It is ... possible to directly compare the moves in the Morris to surviving features of African dance.”²⁹² He does so by mapping African presence into Renaissance England, drawing attention to a sixteenth-century moresca in Italy, which explicitly invoked or

²⁸⁹ Hornback, “‘Extravagant and Wheeling Strangers’: Early Blackface Dancing Fools, Racial Impersonation, and the Limits of Identification,” in *Exemplaria* 20:2 (Summer 2008): 197 (197-223).

²⁹⁰ Hornback, “‘Extravagant and Wheeling Strangers,’” 197.

²⁹¹ Hornback, “‘Extravagant and Wheeling Strangers,’” 198.

²⁹² Hornback, “‘Extravagant and Wheeling Strangers,’” 209.

modeled enslaved sub-Saharan labor.²⁹³ He then argues, “The popularity of the Morris and of the related jig (which ... likewise often included a clown in blackface) coincides not just with the expanding presence of Africans throughout Europe, but with a radical (and related) change in dance fashion,” towards leaping and capering.²⁹⁴ For Hornback, as populations of enslaved sub-Saharans increased throughout Europe, so too did European dancing change to include more athletic leaping and stomping. He examines the “ink-blot-faced illustration for *Nine Daies Wonder*” of Will Kemp.²⁹⁵ In the illustration, “Kemp is shown performing a conventional move, with both arms bent, spread wide, and raised high, while one knee is bent, open outward and raised in a caper.”²⁹⁶ Hornback draws attention to “the distinctive “kneebone-bent,” spread-legged/knees-apart, elbow-bent, over-head hand gestures (either one or both hands) that dance historians associate with African American body movements in New World dance.”²⁹⁷

In order to emphasize the kinship between Kemp and US blackface minstrelsy, Hornback relates Kemp’s distortion of “angular, asymmetrically bending joints and leaps” to TD Rice’s performance of Jim Crow. Namely, in both instances, “the expressiveness of the black dancing body—with its long history of West African dance body language behind it—was readily observable, but its idiom was misconstrued and misrepresented.”²⁹⁸ Once again, with Hornback, we have a narrative wielding imagined Black dancing bodies as embodied sources of spectatorial coercion, *and* as embodied sources of sub-Saharan danced repertoires. Like Gottschild and Hill, Hornback also

²⁹³ Hornback, “‘Extravagant and Wheeling Strangers,’” 201, 207.

²⁹⁴ Hornback, “‘Extravagant and Wheeling Strangers,’” 206.

²⁹⁵ Hornback, “‘Extravagant and Wheeling Strangers,’” 199.

²⁹⁶ Hornback, “‘Extravagant and Wheeling Strangers,’” 208.

²⁹⁷ Hornback, “‘Extravagant and Wheeling Strangers,’” 208.

²⁹⁸ Hornback, “‘Extravagant and Wheeling Strangers,’” 208.

deploys an imagined dancing body with European heritages as a contrast to the sub-Saharan influences evidenced through the imagined Black dancing body. He qualifies the Morris as, “leaping, asymmetric jerking (with legs spread and knees apart), twirling and high-knee-bend stepping” and positions this as an innovation (or deviation) from European dance before the sixteenth century.²⁹⁹ Specifically, the Morris “was far removed from the grounded, formal, linear, and straight-limbed character of so much prior European dance.”³⁰⁰

Notably, Hornback is the first scholar to explicitly relate athletic leaps within sub-Saharan repertoires. He looks to Afro-Caribbean dances, the Calenda/Kalenda and Jonkonnu/John Canoe, to substantiate this claim. He cites Lynn Fauley Emery who, in turn, draws on written sources in the eighteenth century about Calenda/Kalenda, and written sources from the eighteenth through the twentieth century about Jonkonnu/John Canoe.³⁰¹ In doing this, Hornback opens up the possibility for the moresca and morris to be related to sub-Saharan repertoires. He also deploys written sources on an imagined Black dancing and leaping body, in order to configure Jim Crow as a purposeful and broken distortion of sub-Saharan wholeness. He writes, how “Rice made Crow both lame and somewhat hunch-shouldered on one-side.”³⁰² He calls attention to “the implication of *a permanently and inherently bent kneebone*” of Jim Crow, to highlight how TD Rice fashioned a dancing body “not only deformed but irrational and deranged” like Kemp’s Morris fool.³⁰³ Hornback claims here, that TD Rice drew out and distorted the angular complexity of Africanist aesthetics, in order to portray an inherently crooked and irrational, enslaved dancing body. Jim Crow’s dancing body, through

²⁹⁹ Hornback, “‘Extravagant and Wheeling Strangers,’” 206.

³⁰⁰ Hornback, “‘Extravagant and Wheeling Strangers,’” 206.

³⁰¹ Emery, *Black Dance*; on the Calenda/Kalenda 20-24; John Canoe, 30-36

³⁰² Hornback, “‘Extravagant and Wheeling Strangers,’” 218.

³⁰³ Hornback, “‘Extravagant and Wheeling Strangers,’” 218.

wheeling about and broken jumps, thus serves as an embodied source of spectatorial desire for, and knowledge of, enslaved incompetence and ignorance. Simultaneously, however, Jim Crow's dancing body also evokes and enacts sub-Saharan repertoires, leading us back to a historiographic alloy of coerced theft and illusory wholeness.

Throughout all of this evidence, scholars repeatedly assessed the historiographic alloy produced through coercion and violence. That is to say, scholars persistently measured minstrelsy's presence against the silenced retention and remembrance of sub-Saharan repertoires. In the process of producing narratives of African American theatre, as related to African Diasporic circulation of sub-Saharan repertoires, we see the imagined Black dancing body needs the coercion of slavery and minstrelsy to qualify as an embodied source of an event. Knowledge of the imagined Black dancing body circulates with and remains inextricable from trans-Atlantic violence and minstrelsy distortion. If a written source neither leads to nor suggests the coercive displacement associated with enslavement and minstrelsy, then the imagined Black dancing bodies within do not qualify as embodied sources of a performance event.

According to this, the Lopes and Pigafetta source does not have a historiographic home. Unlike the Morris fool as analyzed by Hornback and sites of slavery as analyzed by KD Thompson, the Kongolese moresca does not necessarily point to a minstrelsy future. It does not relate to how we got minstrelsy, nor to how we got Jim Crow's dancing body. So, even if I wrote a chapter about how the Kongolese moresca *possibly* indicates how we could *imagine* the dances known and brought by the "20. and odd Negroes" to Jamestown, the Kongolese moresca would contribute to no

subsequent events in African Diasporic performance histories and African American theatre histories.³⁰⁴

At the most, I could potentially argue that the Kongolese *moresca* relates to Afro-European exchanges of dance repertoires. To claim this *without coercion*, however, would compete with and diverge from the invisible counterpart to our discussion throughout this chapter: the historical landscape of the idealized and imagined ballet body. Recall how each scholar in this chapter, as they assessed evidence of sub-Saharan influence in imagined Black dancing bodies, they also deployed specific repertoires as evidence of European cultural heritages. Constance Valis Hill, Brenda Dixon Gottschild, and Robert Hornback explicitly alluded to vertical and upright, formally contained postures. In the next chapter, then, we turn to the “field of power” exerted through an imagined dancing body with European heritages. We will see how *moresca* and *morris* scholarship, even when exposed as more complex and varied than Hornback’s summary of the associated repertoires, still relies upon an imagined ballet ideal from within European courts. But, more importantly, we will see the lengthy process whereby European dancing masters, philosophers, and aristocrats fashioned court dances (like the *moresca* which precedes and contributes to ballet) as embodied knowledge of the ideal human.

³⁰⁴ Qotd in Engel Sluiter, “New Light on the “20. and Odd Negroes” Arriving in Virginia, August 1619,” in *William & Mary Quarterly*, Third Series, 54:2 (Apr 1997): 395-398.

– 2 – EUROPEANIST DE COUR

*It is good anthropology to think of ballet as a form of ethnic dance.*³⁰⁵

In her landmark essay, “An Anthropologist Looks at Ballet as a Form of Ethnic Dance,” Joann Kealiinohomoku takes dance scholars to task for treating ballet as a universal, unmarked dance practice, and then treating *ethnic* dance practices as divergent from the ballet ideal. In the course of her essay, Kealiinohomoku successfully interrogates the inaccurate range of the word *ethnic*. She shows how scholars use the word to encompass dance practices from the Americas, Asia, and Africa, across many time periods. These dance practices all diverge and differ from ballet as the unspoken original idea and knowledge of dance. *Ethnic*, in other words, means primitive or tribal, which amounts to non-*European* and non-*White* dance practices.³⁰⁶ She further shows how scholars analyze ethnic dance in contrast and opposition to ballet, in that primitive dancing evidences a lack of structure, and therefore an implied lack of progress.³⁰⁷ Scholars responded to Kealiinohomoku’s call to treat ballet as an ethnic dance, and in the past fifty years, scholars like Kariamuwelsh-Asante, Constance Valis-Hill, and Susan Manning have attended to the specifics of regional and cultural

³⁰⁵ Joann Kealiinohomoku, “An Anthropologist Looks at Ballet as a Form of Ethnic Dance,” in *Moving History/Dancing Cultures: A Dance History Reader*, eds. Ann Dils and Ann Cooper Albright, 33-43 (Middletown, Connecticut: Wesleyan University Press, 2001) 33.

³⁰⁶ Kealiinohomoku, “An Anthropologist Looks at Ballet as a Form of Ethnic Dance,” 33.

³⁰⁷ Kealiinohomoku, “An Anthropologist Looks at Ballet as a Form of Ethnic Dance,” 34.

dance practices. Still other scholars, like Marina Nordera and Mark Franco, have positioned ballet explicitly within Western European histories and cultures.

In her work, *The Black Dancing Body: A Geography from Coon to Cool*, Brenda Dixon Gottschild positions the Europeanist dancing body as an ethnic and cultural contrast to the Black dancing body. Gottschild describes the Europeanist dancing body as “dominated and ruled by the erect spine.”³⁰⁸ In addition, “Verticality is a prime value, with the torso held erect, knees straight, body in vertical alignment.”³⁰⁹ The torso is not just erect,

The torso is held still (and sometimes purposefully rigid), the limbs moving away from and returning to the vertical center, with a privileging of energy and gestures that reach upward and outward.³¹⁰

Every body part and gesture, every motion and step, moves up and out, and returns back to an uprightly-controlled center. In moving out from this vertical center, limbs and extremities remain smooth, not bent or crooked, their energy elaborating on and articulating extensions from the vertically-aligned spinal core. Gottschild explains, “I use the term Europeanist as [Africanist’s] counterpart, denoting concepts, practices, attitudes, or forms rooted in European and European American traditions.”³¹¹ For Gottschild, and for many scholars of Black dance, the imagined Europeanist dancing body serves as a source of embodied knowledges originating from within European borders.

³⁰⁸ Brenda Dixon Gottschild, *The Black Dancing Body: A Geography from Coon to Cool* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003) 16.

³⁰⁹ Gottschild, *The Black Dancing Body*, 16.

³¹⁰ Gottschild, *The Black Dancing Body*, 16.

³¹¹ Gottschild, *The Black Dancing Body*, xiii-xiv.

Kealiinohomoku emphasizes, for instance, “Think how culturally revealing it is to see the stylized Western customs enacted on the stage, such as the mannerisms from the age of chivalry.”³¹² The bodies portraying the Western customs and values of chivalry, as well as “themes of unrequited love, sorcery, self-sacrifice through long-suffering, mistaken identity, and misunderstandings which have tragic consequences,” similarly reveal a common aesthetic.³¹³ Kealiinohomoku goes so far as to call it “[o]ur aesthetic,” embodied in “the total revealing of legs, of small heads and tiny feet for women, of slender bodies for both sexes, and the coveted airy quality.”³¹⁴ Chivalry and sorcery, unrequited love and mistaken identity, long, slender bodies lifted up through the air: all of these qualities point to an embodied practice developed from within and for western and central European audiences, from northern Italy to the British Isles. But where did this idealized and imagined ballet body come from? More to the point, where and how did this idealized and imagined ballet body become the primary source for historical knowledge about danced performances?

In this chapter, I explore how the imagined ballet body became the ideal standard of how to qualify dance worthy of writing down, preserving, and then composing into historical narratives. That is, I am thinking through why scholars, from Claude-François Ménéstrier in the seventeenth century to Gottschild in the twentieth century, consistently write either towards or against the imagined ballet body.³¹⁵ In the pages to follow, I attend to the historiographic kinship between interdependence of ballet and the first step of Michel-Rolph Trouillot’s historical process, the

³¹² Kealiinohomoku, “An Anthropologist Looks at Ballet as a Form of Ethnic Dance,” 40.

³¹³ Kealiinohomoku, “An Anthropologist Looks at Ballet as a Form of Ethnic Dance,” 40.

³¹⁴ Kealiinohomoku, “An Anthropologist Looks at Ballet as a Form of Ethnic Dance,” 40.

³¹⁵ When Claude-François Ménéstrier wrote his historical narrative, he qualified the 1581 *Balet comique de la Royne* or *Allegorie de Circé* as the first official ballet. See also Marina Nordera, “Ballet de cour,” in *The Cambridge Companion to Ballet*, ed. Marion Kant, 19-31. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007) 19-21.

creation of sources. I reveal the comparatively late instantiation of an imagined and Europeanist dancing body as a source through which we can ascertain *what happened*. Yet, even though an imagined Europeanist dancing body came late to historiographic practice, its repeated appearance in written documentation, persistent preservation in archives, and deployment in multiple historical narratives, allowed this imagined ballet body to emerge as an origin or root of danced knowledge in legitimated history. The imagined ballet body exerts and extends interdependence to such a degree that historical narratives prior to its instantiation, such as that of the *moresca* and *morris*, articulate embodied knowledge within aristocratic and European ideals of decorum, which eventually came to be known as ballet.

Through dance treatises and increasing print circulation, from the fifteenth to seventeenth centuries, the imagined and Europeanist dancing body also emerged as *that which is said to have happened* in danced pasts. The imagined ballet body emerged as *how* we know what happened, in that when scholars read of imagined ballet bodies and witnesses to ballet performances, they knew dance *happened* because of the presence or invoked presences of ballet performers. As this process deepened, imagined and Europeanist dancing bodies also came to serve as sources of *choreographed* events. This final move ultimately forged a nearly inseparable historiographic kinship between choreography and danced performances in preserved archives. This kinship persists to this day, as scholars from Georgiana Gore to Rodriguez King-Dorset simultaneously define *dance* as a Eurocentric notion of a choreographed event, while asserting that Black dance ultimately belongs within and as legitimated history. The interdependence articulated through the imagined ballet body also extends beyond European borders, silencing non-European knowledge through Eurocentric practices of danced embodiment in much the same way that the Beauchamps-Feuillet choreographic system appropriated regional dances into a codified repertoire.

In the pages to follow, I locate the philosophical parameters for an imagined Europeanist dancing body crystallized in the court of Louis XIV. The imagined Europeanist ideal is a specifically Baroque iteration of the ballet body, which traveled globally with imperial ventures, and served as a rubric for appropriating regional dances into ballet forms.³¹⁶ I then address the prevailing practices of qualifying or defining dance as an event for preservation and recollection, the second and third respective steps of Trouillot's historical process. I articulate the persistence of kinship between choreographed dance as a historical event, by showing how scholars from Kealiinohomoku to Kariamu Welsh-Asante and Georgiana Gore feel the need to qualify sub-Saharan-influenced dancing as dance, but not in terms of choreographed or deliberately staged compositions.³¹⁷ From there, I move into the Renaissance predecessors of the Europeanist ideal of an imagined dancing body. I show how regional European philosophies on dance practice as embodied knowledge laid the foundation for the emergence of a Europeanist ideal in French ballet, shoring up and preserving knowledge of danced events, events which Ménéstrier would later draw on for the first official history of ballet published in 1682.

In this history of a history of dance, we see that in order for choreography to become written knowledge of danced events and imagined dancing bodies as sources of *choreographed* events, we first must attend to the process whereby dancing included both written and embodied

³¹⁶ Susan Leigh Foster, *Choreography & Narrative: Ballet's Staging of Story and Desire* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1996).

³¹⁷ Georgiana Gore, "Traditional Dance in West Africa," in *Dance History: An Introduction*, eds. Janet Adshead-Lansdale, June Layson, 59-80 (London: Routledge, 1994) 59-62; Rodreguez King-Dorset, *Black Dance in London*, 35-45; Kealiinohomoku, "An Anthropologist Looks at Ballet as a Form of Ethnic Dance," in *Moving History/Dancing Cultures*, 34-37; *African Dance: An Artistic, Historical, and Philosophical Inquiry*, ed. Kariamu Welsh-Asante (Trenton, New Jersey: Africa World Press, Inc., 1996).

knowledge, and imagined dancing bodies became written as sources of danced events. In other words, we will see the process whereby European dance masters and scholars articulated embodied practice in writing, in order to compose imagined dancing bodies as participants and creators. They located noble and aristocratic performers as participating in *what happened* and as a source to uncover *that which is said to have happened*. Through writings on dance, the imagined ballet body became European kinship *in motion*, enacting continental kinship across the aristocracy and merchant class. But before we see or read of dance happening, we first need a figure to follow in a historical narrative, we need the historiographic *principal* figure, the imagined dancing body in regional European courts.

BALLET AND INTERDEPENDENCE

[Leonardo] Bruni's *History of the Florentine People* is often singled out as an exemplary work, one that set the whole enterprise of history writing on a new plane.³¹⁸

In terms of historical narratives both written in and just after the Renaissance time period, Claude-François Ménéstrier's history of ballet (1682) came comparatively late. As early as 1442, Leonardo Bruni shifted historiographic practice with his work in *History of the Florentine People*. He divided time into three distinct eras: ancient, medieval, and modern, framing his history as a modern departure from historiographic practice in the previous two eras. As Ianziti observes, "Bruni challenge[d] the standard accounts of the formation and early history of Florence," by comparing ancient and

³¹⁸ Gary Ianziti, *Writing History in Renaissance Italy: Leonardo Bruni and the Uses of the Past* (Boston: Harvard University Press, 2012) 7.

medieval sources against each other.³¹⁹ Bruni also succeeded in locating his work as indebted to both ancient and medieval chronicling practices. He used “classical elegant Latin,” and invoked a Greco-Roman past to authenticate Florence as a political entity.³²⁰ After Bruni, several humanist historians attempted to use his model for writing histories, to varying degrees of success. As we will also see in a later section, Bruni further influenced the thinking of fifteenth-century Italian dance masters who literally wrote noble dancing practices into humanist fields of study. And yet, despite the significance of dancing to court life prior to Bruni’s history, and long after,³²¹ the first historical narrative on European dancing does not emerge until King Louis XIV reigns over France.

In the late seventeenth century, Ménestrier had several (comparatively) recent precedents and sources to deploy in service of his history, including sources reaching back to Bruni’s own time period and location in northern Italy. These sources included the philosophical analyses of dance steps and rhythms by fifteenth- and sixteenth-century Italian dancing masters, Cesare Negri and Fabritio Caroso, as well as descriptions of court life by Baldassare Castiglione, and Thoinot Arbeau’s *Orchésographie* (1589). In line with Renaissance and humanist historiographic practice, Ménestrier also invoked ancient Greek and Roman precedents for dancing. In line with Bruni’s divisions of eras, Ménestrier positioned ballet as *modern* dance, descended from ancient practices. Moreover, his history appeared in the same time period as Louis XIV’s mandate: “to discover the means of making

³¹⁹ Gary Ianziti, “Leonardo Bruni: First Modern Historian?” in *Parergon* 14:2 (1997): 92-94 (85-99).

³²⁰ Ernst Breisach, *Historiography: Ancient, Medieval, and Modern* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2007) 154-155.

³²¹ Jennifer Nevile, *The Eloquent Body: Dance and Humanist Culture in Fifteenth-Century Italy* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2004) 21, 31, 45, 58.

the art of dance comprehensible on paper.”³²² Pierre Beauchamps’ system rose to prominence in Raoul-Auger Feuillet’s publication of *Chorégraphie*. And as Susan Leigh Foster reveals, the Beauchamps-Feuillet system of “notation subjected dancing to laws that all movements appeared to share.”³²³ *Choreography* thus “enabled the dissemination of the latest and most fashionable Parisian innovations.”³²⁴

Historical narratives of dance as *what happened* emerged concurrently with danced performances as documented and choreographed events, and with a process of learning dance, through written choreography, “without need of personal instruction.”³²⁵ The imagined Europeanist dancing body, then, also emerged as a source of knowledge about danced events through written choreographic notation. The “overlapping bundle of silences” here entail the structuring of written knowledge of dancing as *what happened* and *that which is said to have happened*, both routed through imagined dancing bodies. That is, if embodied knowledge of dancing no longer travels primarily from dancer to dancer, teacher to student, performer to spectator, then writing can stand in for how we know what happened. Imagined dancing bodies take historiographic precedence in narrative strategies. To be clear, I am speaking of how dancing and dancing bodies are composed in narrated, historical worlds, and deployed within structures of choreographed knowledge; and that the

³²² Quoted in Rebecca Harris-Warrick and Carol G. Marsh, *Musical Theatre at the Court of Louis XIV: Le mariage de la Grosse Cathos* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994) 84.

³²³ Susan Leigh Foster, “Choreographies and Choreographers,” in *Worlding Dance*, ed. Susan Leigh Foster, 98-118. (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009) 101, 103.

³²⁴ Foster, “Choreographies and Choreographers,” in *Worlding Dance*, 101, 103.

³²⁵ Quoted in Susan Leigh Foster, “Muscle/Memories: How Germaine Acogny and Diane McIntyre Put Their Feet Down,” in *Rhythms of the Afro-Atlantic World: Rituals and Remembrances*, eds. Mamadou Diouf and Ifeoma Kiddoe Nwankwo, 121-135. (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2010) 124.

philosophical convergence of these constitute a “field of power.”³²⁶ I am not claiming that dancing, in actual and lived experience, circulated primarily from printed instructions to aspiring dancers. I am describing, rather, a philosophical shift in the significance assigned to imagined dancing bodies as figures of embodied knowledge in historical narratives. I am further pointing to a philosophical shift in the overlapping knowledges ascribed to imagined dancing bodies, preserved through choreography and as evidence that danced performances *happened*. As I lay out in the rest of the chapter, these layers developed neither simultaneously nor linearly.

For instance, when Kealiinohomoku takes scholars to task for presuming ballet as the epitome of properly advanced and structured movement, she analyzes Hopi rituals for the *lack* of choreography and structure assigned through the category of *primitive*. As she paraphrases one scholar, primitive dance is instinctive and useful to a specific tribe or culture, but has “little to offer in methodology or structure.”³²⁷ She writes, “It is true that some cultures do not place the same value on preserving the names of their innovators as we do.”³²⁸ She acknowledges that, among the Hopi “there is no tradition of naming a choreographer.”³²⁹ But, “Nevertheless they definitely know who, within a Kiva group or society, made certain innovations and why.”³³⁰ In other words, just because a culture or people group does not write down the name of an innovator, this in and of itself does not mean *ethnic* dance *lacks* choreography or structure. By highlighting a form of unwritten knowledge, Kealiinohomoku resists and upends the philosophical “field of power,” which

³²⁶ Michel-Rolph Trouillot, *Silencing the Past: Power and the Production of History* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1995), 115.

³²⁷ Kealiinohomoku, “An Anthropologist Looks at Ballet as a Form of Ethnic Dance,” 34.

³²⁸ Kealiinohomoku, “An Anthropologist Looks at Ballet as a Form of Ethnic Dance,” 35-36.

³²⁹ Kealiinohomoku, “An Anthropologist Looks at Ballet as a Form of Ethnic Dance,” 36.

³³⁰ Kealiinohomoku, “An Anthropologist Looks at Ballet as a Form of Ethnic Dance,” 36.

maintains knowledge of dance is preserved through written choreographic notation of imagined dancing bodies.

Further, Kealiinohomoku insists scholars, especially but not limited to those who rely on ballet as their unspoken ideal of dance, fail to define what they mean when they write the word *dance*. She notes, “the word dance, itself, is never adequately defined to apply cross-culturally through time and space.”³³¹ Her own definition, which she developed over the course of her thesis, comparing Scottish and Irish dancing to Black American and Afro-Caribbean practices, came to this:

Dance is a transient mode of expression, performed in a given form and style by the human body moving in space. Dance occurs through purposefully selected and controlled rhythmic movements; the resulting phenomenon is recognized as dance both by the performer and the observing members of a given group.³³²

Kealiinohomoku includes the general idea of a “human body moving in space,” and “purposefully selected and controlled movements.” Nothing is accidental or excessive from the perspective of the dancer and “observing members of a given group.” Kealiinohomoku succeeds in offering a definition of dance which may be applicable to many cultures and locations, and which does not presume ballet ideals of choreographed events in writing.

³³¹ Kealiinohomoku, “An Anthropologist Looks at Ballet as a Form of Ethnic Dance,” 37.

³³² Kealiinohomoku, “An Anthropologist Looks at Ballet as a Form of Ethnic Dance,” 38; see also Kealiinohomoku, “A Comparative Study of Dance as a Constellation of Motor Behaviors among African and United States Negroes,” (Master’s Thesis, Northwestern University, 1965) in *CORD Research Dance Annual VII* (1976) 4-6, 22-27 (1-180).

When writing of “historical methodology as applied to traditional dance in West Africa,” Georgiana Gore takes a different tactic.³³³ She begins, “To speak of West African dance is in fact a misnomer.”³³⁴ She qualifies *dance* as an “ethnocentrically European term” which does not evoke “applicable systems of structured human body movement of non-European peoples, who have their own terms of reference for conceiving of such activities.”³³⁵ She draws on West and West Central African languages to show how the words for dance also relate directly to concepts of play and drumming. She asks her readers to keep in mind “the indissoluble connections to music and play which exist in the word ‘dance’ for many if not all West Africans.”³³⁶ Gore works to expand how her readers understand the concept of dancing for historical narratives set in West Africa. When her readers read “dance” in her essay, she wants them to imbue the word with ideas of play and rhythm. She wants them to be able to hold these concepts in the word *dance*, without disqualifying the described practices as dance.

She continues, by addressing the question of choreography, arguing that neither *dance* nor *choreography* relate to West African rhythms and movements. Even if one person creates a dance, “it is unlikely that the dance will either be named after this person or recollected in those terms.”³³⁷ Even in ritual dances, “individual performers may introduce new ‘unrehearsed’ steps, but the acknowledged creator or choreographer is the god in question.”³³⁸ Gore does not want her readers to disregard or disqualify West African dancing as dancing, simply because choreography and

³³³ Gore, “Traditional Dance in West Africa,” in *Dance History: An Introduction*, 59.

³³⁴ Gore, “Traditional Dance in West Africa,” in *Dance History: An Introduction*, 59.

³³⁵ Gore, “Traditional Dance in West Africa,” in *Dance History: An Introduction*, 59.

³³⁶ Gore, “Traditional Dance in West Africa,” in *Dance History: An Introduction*, 60.

³³⁷ Gore, “Traditional Dance in West Africa,” in *Dance History: An Introduction*, 60.

³³⁸ Gore, “Traditional Dance in West Africa,” in *Dance History: An Introduction*, 60.

choreographers do not dominate sources of knowledge about dance practices. Gore also does not want her readers to disregard or disqualify West African ritual dancing, simply because the choreographic inspiration may be attributed to a divine entity. Gore succeeds in articulating cultural specificity for West African dance practices, so that her readers do not look for choreographic sources as narratives of European dance histories may lead them to expect. Her move, like Kealiinohomoku's, also points to an expected historiographic kinship between dance and choreography.

Andrée Grau undertakes a related challenge to dance scholars, in that he interrogates spatial analyses of dancing. In other words, Grau is concerned with "how human beings conceptualize the body," and in turn, how that body moves through space.³³⁹ For narratives and analyses of dance, "notions of verticality have been significant in a number of western theatre dance genres."³⁴⁰ Based on the vertical and imagined ballet body, Grau takes scholars to task who treat dancing space, the space through which an imagined dancing body moves, as if "the very concept of space location can only exist through the imaginary planes crossing the body."³⁴¹ These planes, from western anatomy, "are referred to as the sagittal, frontal, and transversal planes."³⁴² The sagittal plane lies from front to back, along a vertical line, splitting the body into *right* and *left*. The frontal plane, also vertical, splits the body into front and back, from *crown* to *foot*. The transversal plane lies perpendicular to both sagittal and frontal, splitting the body at the waist, in *top* and *bottom* halves.

³³⁹ Andrée Grau, "Dancing Bodies, Spaces/Places and the Senses: A Cross-Cultural Investigation," in *Journal of Dance & Somatic Practices* 3:1, 2 (2011) 6.

³⁴⁰ Grau, "Dancing Bodies, Spaces/Places and the Sense," 9.

³⁴¹ Grau, "Dancing Bodies, Spaces/Places and the Sense," 13.

³⁴² Grau, "Dancing Bodies, Spaces/Places and the Sense," 13.

Using an imagined ballet body to compose—to write about and narrate—how imagined dancing bodies move through space presupposes a verticalized, right to left, crown to foot, and top to bottom, four-dimensional matrix. The three dimensions come from the compartmentalizing of the dancing body across the three planes, while the fourth dimension comes from time. Moreover, since “rhythm is simply space divided by time,”³⁴³ Grau’s matrix also reveals the tri-planar influence on rhythmic analyses. A tri-planar spatial matrix also gives us the metronymic measure of danced time, of time measured in beats and ratios from the Greek and Roman mathematicians emphasized in Renaissance humanism. Grau’s challenge echoes and amplifies the calls by Kealiinohomoku and Gore: narratives of dance practices need not be imagined solely along the lines – the spatial matrices and rhythmic measures – set down through a discipline centered on court ballet.

As Trouillot tells us, we do not get legitimated historical narratives like Ménéstrier’s in a one-step process. Prior to the emergence of this first official European-language narrative of any dance, we have “the moment of fact creation (the making of *sources*)” and “the moment of fact assembly (the making of *archives*).”³⁴⁴ After these steps, we have “the moment of fact retrieval (the making of *narratives*)” and “the moment of retrospective significance (the making of *history* in the final instance).”³⁴⁵ Moreover, these steps do not occur linearly, but the “processes ... feed on each other.”³⁴⁶ In this section, I have focused on the second and third steps: “the making of *narratives*” and “the making of *history* in the final instance,” in order to show “how [dance] history works.” That is, I laid out the after-effects stemming from within the “field of power” as constituted by ballet as

³⁴³ M. Nourbese Philip, ‘Black W/Holes: A History of Brief Time,’ part 1 of 2, Jacket2 <http://jacket2.org/commentary/%E2%80%99black-wholes-history-brief-time%E2%80%99-part-1-2>.

³⁴⁴ Trouillot, *Silencing the Past*, 26.

³⁴⁵ Trouillot, *Silencing the Past*, 26.

³⁴⁶ Trouillot, *Silencing the Past*, 26.

the first modern and European dance to receive its own historical narrative. In order for scholars to write ethnic or primitive dance into historical narratives of dance as dance, and not as play or as instinctual, unstructured behavior, they had to first contend with the precedence of ballet in European-language sources, archives, and narratives. Our narrative then, going forward, entails disentangling the layered silences which have converged to formulate the imagined Europeanist dancing body as a source of choreographed knowledge. I am concerned with the relationship of ballet to Trouillot's observation that "Power does not enter the story once and for all It precedes the narrative proper, contributes to its creation, and to its interpretation."³⁴⁷ Now that we have explored how power contributes to interpretation and subsequent scholarly conversations, we turn to the predecessors of Ménéstrier's narrative and the creation of an imagined Europeanist dancing body.

VIRTUOUS BELONGING

*In history, power begins at the source.*³⁴⁸

In Trouillot's first moment, sources allow for the appearance of facts, facts which could become archived events, and events which could then made available for inclusion in narratives comprising legitimated history. In this section, I examine the historical process of creating an imagined Europeanist dancing body as a source for historical events and knowledge, available for inclusion in future narratives of legitimated history. Specifically, I track the emergence of Europeanist presence in imagined dancing bodies, and the spaces through which these imagined dancing bodies move, in

³⁴⁷ Trouillot, *Silencing the Past*, 28-29.

³⁴⁸ Trouillot, *Silencing the Past*, 29.

the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. I take up significant moments in the written philosophies of dance as embodied knowledge, from fifteenth-century Italian dance masters and humanists to Arbeau's sixteenth-century treatise and then to the Beauchamp-Feuillet system of choreographic notation. Through imagined dancing bodies, I track the categorization of humanity and rulership, alongside the intersections between dance decorum and governance. "Power begins at the source," but how do we get the source of an imagined dancing body in European courts, and how does this source change over time?

The earliest dance manuals in European languages emerge in England, France, Burgundy, and Italy. As Nevile describes and Ann Hutchinson Guest shows, the earliest French-language treatises on basse dance come from the late fifteenth and early sixteenth century. While "the dance material they represent was being performed from the middle of the fifteenth century," written sources on the dancing practices of French and Burgundian courts only appeared later.³⁴⁹ Further, these treatises contain basic instructional information, explaining the five steps and "how to arrange these five steps in different combinations or *mesures*."³⁵⁰ From fifteenth-century England, as well, "The sole surviving source ... is a similar collection of choreographies and tunes."³⁵¹ In this printed work, "The dance material forms part of a small pocketbook obviously intended for personal use."³⁵² In other words, written sources of dance practices in England, France, and Burgundy still

³⁴⁹ Ann Hutchinson Guest, *Choreo-Graphics: A Comparison of Dance Notation Systems from the Fifteenth Century to the Present* (New York: Gordon and Breach, 1987) 1-5; Nevile, *Eloquent Body*, 7.

³⁵⁰ Nevile, *Eloquent Body*, 7.

³⁵¹ Nevile, *Eloquent Body*, 7.

³⁵² Nevile, *Eloquent Body*, 7.

“depended on embodied culture for transmission.”³⁵³ Legitimated knowledge of dancing passed primarily from person to person, from host to visitor, from expert to learner.

In Italy, dance masters sought to legitimate dance as knowledge qualified for inclusion within the humanist liberal arts. Domenico da Piacenza, whose patron was Leonello d’Este, wrote *De arte saltandi et choreas ducendi/De la arte di ballare et danzare* (circa 1455). Both Antonio Cornazano and Guglielmo Ebreo da Pesaro were taught by Piacenza. Cornazano, whose patron was Francesco I of Sforza, wrote *Libro dell’arte del danzare* (circa 1455). Guglielmo, who served in Milan, Urbino, Naples, and Ferrara, wrote *De pratica seu arte tripudii*, also called, *Trattato dell’ arte del ballare* (circa 1463). Their treatises included “a large number of choreographic descriptions” for aristocratic dances, as well as theories on “the philosophical justification for dancing.”³⁵⁴ These sources provide the earliest written mentions of the *moresca* in Italy, and they also provide the first written philosophies on embodied movement in a European region. Through a variety of strategies, Piacenza, Cornazano, and Guglielmo configured dance practice as an intellectual pursuit worthy of humanist, academic study, transposing the physical into philosophical parameters.

Dance masters, like noted humanists of the time (including but not limited to, Leon Battista Alberti, Guarino Guarini, and Leonardo Bruni³⁵⁵) lived under the patronage of noble courts.

³⁵³ Diana Taylor, *The Archive and the Repertoire: Performing Cultural Memory in the Americas* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2003), 17.

³⁵⁴ Nevile, *Eloquent Body*, 6.

³⁵⁵ Leon Battista Alberti is often classified as an architect, but he also wrote poetry and philosophy, studied ruins of classical Rome, and served as a priest. He successfully framed his play, *Philodoxeos fabula* (circa 1434), as an early classical text (see Leon Battista Alberti, *The Play of Philodoxus*, in *Humanist Comedies*, ed. and transl., Gary R. Grund 70-83 (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2005). Alberti lived in Florence and Rome, and Leonello d’Este was his patron for a time. Guarino Guarini studied Greek and ancient Greek texts, and his teaching methods were famous throughout

Humanists moved as educators, architects, poets, and diplomats, and “identified with the ruling elite, consciously seeking to identify themselves with the philosophers and decision makers of the ancient world.”³⁵⁶ By configuring the dancing of Italian nobility within the proper “intellectual framework,” Domenico, Guglielmo, and Cornazano “moved dance closer to the humanist belief that an education in the *studia humanitatis* was essential for those entrusted with the governance of the state.”³⁵⁷ In other words, if the dance masters were successful, then an education in dancing would be accepted into the humanist course of study as equal to studying music, arithmetic, geometry, and astronomy (the scientific arts), and grammar and rhetoric, philosophy, and history (the humanist arts).

According to Nevile, these dance masters sought to configure noble dancing practices within humanist parameters, in order to theorize dancing as a way to enact cosmic harmony and as a way to foster virtuous and ethical rulers of the state. In other words, “If dance was a liberal art it could then lay claim to be a demonstration of eternal truths, a microcosm of the cosmos, as was its sister and progenitor music.”³⁵⁸ And further, “In order for dance to be a demonstration of eternal truths, ... movements had to be understandable at an intellectual level, and based on the appropriate framework.”³⁵⁹ That is, “The dance masters were fully aware that for dance to be included (through its association with music) in the liberal arts, it had to be addressed both on a physical level and an

Europe. Leonello d’Este was his patron. Leonardo Bruni was a significant historian in the Renaissance, and wrote history based on the three-part division of Ancient, Middle, and Modern eras. He served as Chancellor of Florence (1410-1411, 1427-1444).

³⁵⁶ Nevile, *Eloquent Body*, 14-15.

³⁵⁷ Nevile, *Eloquent Body*, 3.

³⁵⁸ Nevile, *Eloquent Body*, 3.

³⁵⁹ Nevile, *Eloquent Body*, 3.

intellectual level.”³⁶⁰ For inclusion in humanist curriculum, dancing needed theoretical qualities aligned within the academic training designed for noble clients and patrons, and their children. Embodied movement needed a philosophical basis to justify its intellectual significance to nobility.

Nevile explains, the humanist curriculum was built on the idea that “those in the ruling section of society had to have a sufficient intellectual understanding and knowledge of the human condition” in order “that their exercise of power was restrained by virtue and ideas of the common good.”³⁶¹ Humanists were deeply concerned with the ethics of governance, basing their work on the idea that, “In order to govern wisely, the ruling elite had to have the appropriate intellectual training and skills.”³⁶² They educated and advised the future and present rulers of Italy through examinations of classical texts from Greek and Roman philosophy, the grammar and rhetoric of classical Latin, as well as history, arithmetic, astronomy, geometry, and music. Nevile notes, humanists “did not wish their affiliation with the center of power in society to be questioned.”³⁶³ Accordingly, they created classical precedents for their roles, such as, “the fact that Aristotle was the tutor to Alexander the Great, that Plato was involved in teaching the kings of Sicily, and that Cicero played an important influential role in the public affairs of imperial Rome.”³⁶⁴ Humanists moved in relation to elite power, and designed their curriculum of seven liberal arts to enhance and edify the execution of power.³⁶⁵

³⁶⁰ Nevile, *Eloquent Body*, 2-3.

³⁶¹ Nevile, *Eloquent Body*, 3.

³⁶² Nevile, *Eloquent Body*, 3.

³⁶³ Nevile, *Eloquent Body*, 14.

³⁶⁴ Nevile, *Eloquent Body*, 15.

³⁶⁵ For more on how humanist educators, in particular, often traveled between courts and regions of Italy, see Robert Black, *Humanism and Education in Medieval and Renaissance Italy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001) 4-5.

Domenico, Guglielmo, and Cornazano used music as their access point for configuring dancing within the humanist liberal arts. Like humanists, they educated nobility, and they also performed with nobility on public occasions.³⁶⁶ Guglielmo, for instance, claimed dance as “the outward, physical realization of the harmony of music.”³⁶⁷ Music theory, in fifteenth century Italy, drew on Pythagorean and Platonic theories of “the numerical basis of the universe,” including “the view that the human soul is ordered in the same proportions as the world soul.”³⁶⁸ Guglielmo claimed that dance “shares the characteristics of music; that is, it too is a realization of the proportions that govern all the cosmos, and which tie human beings into the harmony of the universe.”³⁶⁹ In other words, “Dance was an ordering of movements of the human body that was concordant with the proportioning of the music which accompanied it.”³⁷⁰ Dancing, like music, had

See also Richard Andrews, *Scripts and Scenarios: The Performance of Comedy in Renaissance Italy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993) 62; and Paul Oskar Kristeller, *Renaissance Thought and Arts: Collected Essays* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1990) 5, 18, 42-46. For a controversial interpretation of humanists’ inherent inclination (rather than negotiated convergence) to reify power, see Anthony Grafton and Lisa Jardine, *From Humanism to the Humanities* (Boston: Harvard University Press, 1986).

³⁶⁶ Nevile, *Eloquent Body*, 21-22.

³⁶⁷ Nevile, *Eloquent Body*, 65.

³⁶⁸ Nevile, *Eloquent Body*, 106-107. “Since they believed that the number ten defined the limit of the physical world, the only proportions that could form the concordant intervals of the musical scale were the proportions between one, two, three, and four: 1:2, 1:3, 1:4, 2:3, 2:4, and 3:4. ... Thus the concordant intervals of the musical scale for the ancient Greeks (and the medieval West) were those formed by those that remain: the octave (2:1), the fifth (3:2), and the fourth (4:3).” See also, Platonic sequences and ratios, which were 1:2:4:8 and 1:3:9:27.

³⁶⁹ Nevile, *Eloquent Body*, 65.

³⁷⁰ Nevile, *Eloquent Body*, 78. See also Julia Sutton, *Courtly Dance of the Renaissance: a new translation and edition of the Nobiltà di dame (1600)* (New York: Dover Publications, 1995) 21-22.

the capability to evoke the cosmic order through harmonious and embodied movement. Dance moved human souls closer to the divine.

Each dance master developed theories on *misura*, which covered individual performers' movements as moderation, as well as the geometric shapes evoked over the floor and through the air, and the Platonic ideal of music. "Misura embodied the idea of proportion: a proportioning of the space around a dancer's body through the movements of the movements of the body."³⁷¹ Misura, through its relationship to proportion, evoked an imagined dancing body "neither rigid nor excessively floppy, but well controlled."³⁷² That is, "moderation in movement was seen as natural, while excessive movement, or lack of movement, was regarded as unnatural, ugly, and a sign of the vices or defects in a person's character."³⁷³ Nobles, then, were not expected or trained to hold their body rigidly erect, but they were expected to exhibit "controlled fluidity."³⁷⁴ Domenico emphasized a similar decorum, "The dancer's movements should always be smooth, never jerky, and always smaller rather than larger, so that the dancer does not overbalance."³⁷⁵ In relation to *misura*, then, the dance masters fashion an imagined dancing body as noble and virtuous, *if* it adheres to a decorum of moderation through elegance. This ideal decorum originated from within the noble and imagined dancing body, and extended out to the spaces through which the elite and imagined dancing body moved. Decorous bodies moved through and generated decorous spaces in performance.

³⁷¹ Nevile, *Eloquent Body*, 77.

³⁷² Nevile, *Eloquent Body*, 87.

³⁷³ Nevile, *Eloquent Body*, 10.

³⁷⁴ Nevile, *Eloquent Body*, 98-99.

³⁷⁵ Nevile, *Eloquent Body*, 98-99.

Nevile further reveals how the imagined dancing body both contributed to and reflected noble decorum in their everyday living. “The rules according to which courtiers were expected to move on the dance floor applied to every other part of their lives.”³⁷⁶ Embodying “a noble and temperate bearing helped to distinguish them from those who did not belong to the elite.”³⁷⁷ Dancing with moderation and *misura* further indicated a virtuous soul, “if the movements of the body were ungraceful, then the movements of the soul would be presumed to be similarly ugly and inharmonious.”³⁷⁸ Conversely, clumsiness indicated a baser nature, and “excessive movement was a sign of moral weakness as well as low social standing.”³⁷⁹ For a member of nobility to exhibit and embody moral weakness could have devastating consequences, according to the dance masters. In other words, “excessive movement was a sign of moral weakness as well as low social standing.”³⁸⁰ Executing “elegant movement” would convince one’s associates of the moral nature of one’s character.”³⁸¹ And, “Those who moved in an ungraceful and inelegant manner in public exposed their inner nature for all to see.”³⁸²

From Nevile’s correlation between the dance masters and humanists, we see how the treatises related dancing directly to the governing capacity of a member of the nobility. Elegance and grace, learned on the dance floor and executed in everyday life, qualified a member of nobility within

³⁷⁶ Nevile, *Eloquent Body*, 2.

³⁷⁷ Nevile, *Eloquent Body*, 2; cf Potentio’s description of Doxia in *Philodoxios fabula*, quoted in Anthony Grafton, *Leon Battista Alberti: Master Builder of the Italian Renaissance*, (New York: Hill and Wang, 2000) 4. Full play translated in *Humanist Comedies*, ed and transl., Gary R. Grund, 70-169.

³⁷⁸ Nevile, *Eloquent Body*, 2.

³⁷⁹ Nevile, *Eloquent Body*, 97-98.

³⁸⁰ Nevile, *Eloquent Body*, 97-98.

³⁸¹ Nevile, *Eloquent Body*, 90.

³⁸² Nevile, *Eloquent Body*, 91.

the elite circles of power, thereby also qualifying them to execute the moral and ethical obligations of a ruler to the governed. Imagined dancing bodies, which adhered to noble decorum and created decorous dancing space, both reflected and enhanced virtuous ruling bodies. Decorous ruling bodies, then, generated decorous and ordered spaces of governance. Imagined dancing bodies, which did not adhere to noble decorum, thus created indecorous and chaotic dancing space. The disharmony of the indecorous dancing body in performance would reveal inherent “moral weakness,” or an un-virtuous ruling body. Bodies without virtue were not qualified to fulfill the moral or ethical obligations to the governed, and would create chaotic, disharmonious spaces of governance.

Dancing with moderation and *misura*, elegance and grace in proper proportion, was also important for nobles, because of the capability for dance and music to affect spectators in the audience. Dancing, gave nobles “a tremendous power and a responsibility: a power to affect the emotions of those who watched, and the responsibility to represent only morally edifying emotions.”³⁸³ Nevile explains how Guglielmo’s theory drew on Petrarchan ideas of informed and uninformed audiences.³⁸⁴ That is, “When practiced by virtuous and noble men, who are informed about its style, structure, and philosophical framework, [dancing] will have only positive and beneficial consequences.”³⁸⁵ Conversely, “It is only when dance is practiced by “dissolute, evil, base, and lecherous men” that evil consequences will occur.”³⁸⁶ Thus, even though dancing was a physical skill, not just anyone could learn how to dance according to philosophies like *misura*, and enact noble virtue in their performances. In developing theoretical rationale for the qualities of elite dance

³⁸³ Nevile, *Eloquent Body*, 92.

³⁸⁴ Nevile, *Eloquent Body*, 9, 67-69.

³⁸⁵ Nevile, *Eloquent Body*, 68.

³⁸⁶ Nevile, *Eloquent Body*, 68.

practices, these dance masters substantiated their own positions as educators for the elite and wrote dancing as a reflection of virtuous power.

Going further, not just anyone could see or watch noble dancing and comprehend cosmic harmony in the performance. Nevile explains, according to the dance masters, “On those who have the knowledge to appreciate and understand it, dance has a virtuous effect.”³⁸⁷ So that their readership, students, and audiences would recognize dancing as enacting “the fundamental truth and beauty of the cosmos,” the dance masters wrote *misura* in relationship to Platonic theories of the universe’s numerical essence. They worked from “the rhythmic proportioning of music” as the basis for dancing, and explained four dancing rhythms “in relation to each other in the ratios of 1:2, 2:3, and 3:4.”³⁸⁸ These “same ratios that the medieval and Renaissance West believed represented virtue, the noble ideal of temperance and moderation,” thus covered music, already accepted into the seven liberal arts, and dancing, which came from music.³⁸⁹

By writing dance practices into musical and Platonic ratios, the dance masters drew on accepted knowledge, on accepted concepts of numerical virtue, already taught to and understood by nobility. The dance masters thus created “the distinction between an uninformed group of people and an informed elite who have the advantage of an intellectual appreciation of their dance practice.”³⁹⁰ Only members of nobility with the proper training in Platonic theories of ideal ratios, as

³⁸⁷ Nevile, *Eloquent Body*, 71.

³⁸⁸ Nevile, *Eloquent Body*, 80. The four rhythms were named *bassadanza misura* (the base), *piva misura*, *saltarello misura*, and *quaternaria misura*.

³⁸⁹ Nevile, *Eloquent Body*, 80.

³⁹⁰ Nevile, *Eloquent Body*, 67-68.

applied in arithmetic and music, would see and apprehend dancing as “the perfect practical art ... in which [misura] was expressed simultaneously in sound and movement.”³⁹¹

In humanist education, “The belief that geometric order led to moral virtue was commonplace in fifteenth-century Italy,” and the dance masters designed their floor patterns accordingly.³⁹² Nevile notes, Domenico, Guglielmo, and Cornazano used circles, rectangles, and squares “as overarching shapes that were formed and maintained through most of the dance, and within which the performers interacted.”³⁹³ In other words, fifteenth-century Italian dance masters did not use geometric shapes “as a sequence of discrete figures out of which the choreography was put together, and between which the dancers moved.”³⁹⁴ Rather, “the geometric shapes only became apparent when the dance [was] executed,” in that the dance masters designed steps through which performers created, shifted, and re-formed the shapes as they danced.³⁹⁵ In this way, the dance masters developed an imagined dancing body moving through geometric order, so that educated performers and spectators, “might be led into noble and virtuous behavior.”³⁹⁶

Nevile notes, for instance, in fifteenth-century Italy, the triangle symbolized fire and water, depending on the upward or downward orientation of the apex. Further, “this geometric shape was also a symbol of the link, or relationship between the earthly and divine spheres.”³⁹⁷ Noble audiences, educated in humanist curriculum, could have recognized this, in that, “For the educated

³⁹¹ Nevile, *Eloquent Body*, 78.

³⁹² Nevile, *Eloquent Body*, 10-11.

³⁹³ Nevile, *Eloquent Body*, 125-126.

³⁹⁴ Nevile, *Eloquent Body*, 126.

³⁹⁵ Nevile, *Eloquent Body*, 126.

³⁹⁶ Nevile, *Eloquent Body*, 125-126.

³⁹⁷ Nevile, *Eloquent Body*, 129.

viewer, the sustained presentation of the geometric figure of the triangle would be a visual reminder of the moral imperative to aspire to a closer knowledge of the divine nature.”³⁹⁸ By wielding geometric shapes, formed through steps and spatial configurations, the dance masters positioned elite dancing practices as a route through which performers and spectators could acquire greater knowledge of divine order and harmony. That is, “this ordered, geometrical movement in dance that would encourage men and women to imitate the divine order in their own lives through noble and virtuous behavior.”³⁹⁹

All of this, the dance masters did in service of aligning dance with humanist philosophies of education for Italian nobility. Nevile further indicates,

The dance masters were so concerned to establish this link [between music as a scientific art and dance] because those who understood and participated in the four mathematical arts of the quadrivium—music, arithmetic, geometry, and astronomy—were engaged in the pursuit of wisdom. Practitioners of these four arts were considered to exercise true knowledge, rather than just a particular skill or ability that could be taught as, for example, could be the skills of a stonemason or carpenter.⁴⁰⁰

In other words, by locating dancing – the practices which they were employed to teach to and execute in front of nobility – as “true knowledge” or wisdom, with a numerical, rational basis, Domenico, Guglielmo, and Cornazano literally wrote elite dancing as humanist knowledge in

³⁹⁸ Nevile, *Eloquent Body*, 129.

³⁹⁹ Nevile, *Eloquent Body*, 10-11.

⁴⁰⁰ Nevile, *Eloquent Body*, 104-105.

motion, over the air and through the ground. They generated an imagined and elite Italian dancing body as a source of knowledge in relation to Platonic ratios and geometric order. Through their work, imagined dancing bodies became part of what happened on the dance floor, in terms of the notation of floor patterns and movements. The imagined dancing body, as an elite figure, also became a philosophy of *how* to live and move within the virtuous decorum appropriate for membership in the ruling class. Dancing became a practice and field of study for those who desired to “exercise true knowledge” in pursuit of comprehending the human condition for virtuous and ethical governance.

As written documents, these Italian treatises testify to early efforts to articulate imagined dancing bodies as sources of knowledge, thereby placing embodied transmission in conversation with printed circulation of *what happened* and *that which is said to have happened*. Nevile observes, “Up until this time dance instruction had presumably been an oral practice, with courtiers learning new dances directly from those most skilled.”⁴⁰¹ She substantiates this by examining literary descriptions of dance, where “the words used to describe scenes of people dancing were those words in common usage, rather than any specialized vocabulary.”⁴⁰² In other words, neither poets nor dance masters wrote down how they qualified steps or gestures, or how they arranged dancers into staged compositions.

To qualify Nevile’s statement with Taylor, however, prior to these Italian treatises, dance instruction was primarily a practice of embodied transmission.⁴⁰³ *How to dance* moved from the instructor or expert to the student, or from performer to the audience member, in that, one body became a model of behavior and decorum for another. Prior to these written treatises, *what happened*

⁴⁰¹ Nevile, *Eloquent Body*, 58.

⁴⁰² Nevile, *Eloquent Body*, 58.

⁴⁰³ Taylor, *The Archive and the Repertoire*, 16-19.

entailed embodied transmission. Moments of teaching, of instructing and transferring embodied skills from one body to another, and moments of exchanging, of performing and sharing embodied skills from one body to another, encompassed *that which is said to have happened*. Only those who were there—who learned or performed, who shared or who observed—these dancing practices could testify and share what happened, *whether or not they wrote it down*. Embodied transmission and memory circulated *how to dance* beyond both the scope *and* preservation of written sources.

In other words, a lack of preserved writing did not necessarily disqualify embodied movement as knowledge.⁴⁰⁴ Therefore, with the philosophical qualification of noble dancing practices as “true knowledge” or part of the humanist “pursuit of wisdom,” fifteenth-century Italian dance masters also enacted early erasures of other imagined dancing bodies as sources of knowledge. Because by fashioning an imagined and elite Italian dancing body through humanist ideals of noble virtue and decorum, the dance masters simultaneously silenced and displaced unvirtuous dancing bodies as sources of “true knowledge.” What changed, in other words, were not necessarily the practices themselves, or the significance of these practices in court life. Nevile notes, “Dancing did not suddenly become a part of elite behavior with Domenico in the 1430s; it had been part of aristocratic life and civilized behavior in previous centuries.”⁴⁰⁵ What changed, was the elevation, through preserved writing, of very specific dancing practices as constituting “true knowledge” of “the human condition” within humanist philosophies of noble decorum. What changed was the qualification of noble *repertoires* as transmissions of knowledge worthy of preserving and writing, practicing and studying, towards a more virtuous and noble future in Renaissance Italy.

⁴⁰⁴ See Taylor, *The Archive and the Repertoire*, 18, “What changed ... was ... the degree of legitimization of writing over other epistemic ... systems.” In other words, “Nonverbal practices ... were not considered valid forms of knowledge.”

⁴⁰⁵ Nevile, *Eloquent Body*, 16.

As Trouillot notes,

What we call the Renaissance, much more an invention in its own right than a rebirth, ushered in a number of philosophical questions to which politicians, theologians, artists, and soldiers provided both concrete and abstract answers. What is Beauty? What is Order? What is the State? But also and above all: What is Man?⁴⁰⁶

In fashioning an imagined and noble Italian dancing body, Domenico, Guglielmo, and Cornazano answered each of these questions in terms of an ideally virtuous decorum. *What is Beauty?* Eloquence and grace in moderation, with fluid flexibility. *What is Order?* Misura, or divine ratios of universal order in music and movement, and geometric formations. *What is the State?* A space requiring a decorous, gracefully ordered, and ethical ruler. *What is Man?* A virtuous ideal body in the seat of power. The knowledge of the human condition granted through the imagined dancing body in these treatises, then, was knowledge of the *ideal human*. These fifteenth-century dance masters composed an imagined dancing body as a source of knowledge of the *ideal human condition*, what it meant to live and move as an ideally virtuous body qualified for ethical rule and governance. Ideal and virtuous bodies learned and enacted order on the dance floor, which they also brought to the court and spaces of governance.

Furthermore, these dance masters composed imagined spectating bodies as educated participants in apprehending the knowledge which imagined dancing bodies both enacted and made available for humanist study. Not only did noble dancing bring forth or furnish knowledge of the ideal human condition, dance masters intended this knowledge for circulation among idealized spectators and audience members with the ability to decipher Platonic virtues and geometric orders.

⁴⁰⁶ Trouillot, *Silencing the Past*, 75.

In the dance treatises, we see an early glimpse of *how* to watch dance, how to understand *what happened*, and then participate in *that which is said to have happened*, in order to contribute to discussing and extending “true knowledge” of the ideal human condition. Put another way, these dance treatises offer an early glimpse of forming imagined spectating bodies as sources of what happened. Because the dance masters wrote to educated audiences, who knew of and would be interested in philosophical discussions around Platonic ratios and geometric virtues, they narrowed the range of imagined bodies in audiences for dance performances who could narrate that *which is said to have happened*.

Meaning, for instance, in the 1491 reception for Alfonso d’Este and Anna Sforza, Anna Sforza’s enslaved and sub-Saharan domestic laborers become excluded and disqualified as sources of what happened on the dance floor. Based on the philosophical parameters of these early treatises, enslaved sub-Saharans in court audiences do not qualify as educated spectators pursuing wisdom or “true knowledge.” Through the imagined dancing bodies fashioned in these treatises, we see an early indication of “degrees of humanity” in performance, in that “ultimately, some humans were more so than others.”⁴⁰⁷ Specifically, for Domenico, Guglielmo, and Cornazano, virtuous members of nobility qualify as learning from and then enacting the ideal human on the dance floor. We also see imagined spectating bodies engaging in “hierarchies of looking as a reflection of ... difference,” where difference qualifies proximity or distance from the ideal human.⁴⁰⁸ Again, for Domenico, Guglielmo, and Cornazano, virtuous and educated members of nobility qualify as learning from and then enacting the ideal human they witness on the dance floor. For these dance masters, in other

⁴⁰⁷ Trouillot, *Silencing the Past*, 76.

⁴⁰⁸ Stephanie L. Batiste, “Dunham Possessed: Ethnographic Bodies, Movement, and Transnational Constructions of Blackness,” in *The Journal of Haitian Studies*, 13:2 (2007): 12.

words, noble performers and spectators can reflect and assess a body's proximity to the ideal human, based on their education and practice in "hierarchies of looking" on the dance floor.

While these Italian dance treatises point to an imagined and noble dancing body, the concomitant rise of the merchant class and financial resources for nautical ventures subsequently extended circulation of this idealized body and decorum of governance. As previously noted, by the end of the fifteenth century, dancing schools in Siena and Florence were marketing an education in elite trends to clients from the merchant class.⁴⁰⁹ Learning how to dance, sing, and play an instrument offered "tangible social advantages."⁴¹⁰ Sources of how to learn remained with the instructors themselves. We do not yet see a significant body of printed material circulating to teach embodied movements for dancing, or skills in playing instruments and singing. Embodied transmission, in other words, remained the primary mode of circulation and exchange, even as the dance masters wrote down, and archivists subsequently preserved, philosophies relating "degrees of humanity" to decorous and noble bodies.

In Italy, in particular, merchant families like the Medici family, gained access to ruling Italian courts through finance and banking. They enhanced their financial ventures by establishing branches of the Medici bank throughout the Mediterranean, including but not limited to, Lisbon, Valencia, Seville, Naples, and Florence. These specific cities served as Mediterranean ports of entry for enslaved laborers, including the rising trade in enslaved sub-Saharan from down the Atlantic

⁴⁰⁹ Frank D'Accone, *The Civic Muse* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1997) 635, 636; McGinnis, "Moving in High Circles," 234-235; Nevile, *Eloquent Body*, 25.

⁴¹⁰ D'Accone, *The Civic Muse*, 636.

coast.⁴¹¹ Put another way, fifteenth-century dance treatises appear in Italy in correlation to the invention of the West in western and central Europe, which included, “The definitive expulsion of the Muslims from Europe, the so-called voyages of exploration, and the maturation of the absolutist state.”⁴¹²

Yet, from these treatises, “degrees of humanity” do not yet correlate to a *European* or *Western* ideal human. Indeed, based on the dance masters’ virtuous ideals of decorum, Italian nobility rumored to have sub-Saharan or Moorish African heritages were still qualified to serve as sources of what happened. This includes Alessandro de’Medici of Florence, known as il Moro, whose younger half-sister was Caterina de’Medici.⁴¹³ Their father was Lorenzo II de’Medici and their great-uncle was Pope Leo X. While Alessandro would die without leaving an heir to the Florentine Republic, Caterina married King Henry II of France to become Queen consort. Under Catherine’s sponsorship, the first legitimated ballet de cour premiered in 1581.⁴¹⁴ Catherine de’Medici provides a critical link for the circulation of Italian dance practices into the French court. She sponsored elaborate dances like those to which she was accustomed from her time in northern Italy, and brought in Italian musicians and dance masters, artists and designers, to work and perform.⁴¹⁵

⁴¹¹ William D. Phillips, Jr., *Slavery in Medieval and Early Modern Iberia* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2013) 42, 66, 124; and Hugh Thomas, *The Slave Trade: The Story of the Atlantic Slave Trade: 1440-1870* (New York: Touchstone, 1997) 84-86.

⁴¹² Trouillot, *Silencing the Past*, 74.

⁴¹³ For more on Alessandro de’Medici’s Moorish and sub-Saharan African heritages, see John Brackett, “Race and Rulership: Alessandro de’Medici, First Medici Duke of Florence, 1529-1537,” in *Black Africans in Renaissance Europe*, eds. T. F. Earle and K. J. P. Lowe, 303-325. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005).

⁴¹⁴ Nordera, “Ballet de cour,” in *The Cambridge Companion to Ballet*, 29.

⁴¹⁵ Nordera, “Ballet de cour,” in *The Cambridge Companion to Ballet*, 21.

DECOROUS CONQUEST

In the 1580s, Jehan Tabouret, a Jesuit priest worked in Langres, Burgundy, southeast of Paris. Under the name Thoinot Arbeau, he wrote a treatise on dancing practices contemporary to his time. He “specifically named dances in theatrical works of Renaissance France,” such as “Trihory de Bretagne,” and dances from particular regions, like the Spanish pavana and Scottish branle.⁴¹⁶ Arbeau used the Greek work for dance, *orcheisthai*, to coin *orchésographie*, or the writing of dances. *Orchésographie* provides the music notation and dance descriptions for over 47 different dances, most of which appear scattered throughout other dance manuals and written literature of the time. Arbeau’s treatise offers insight into European circulation of dance practices, as well. He drew on printed manuals and practices from all over Europe, including but not limited to work published by Pierre Attaignat and Adrian Le Roy, (noted publishers of musical works in sixteenth-century Paris), Tielman Susato’s *Danserye* from the Low Countries, and *Reglas de dançar* (anonymous) from Spain.⁴¹⁷

In the humanist tradition, Arbeau wrote his treatise in the form a dialogue between himself as an older dance master, and a student, Capriol. Capriol approaches Arbeau, because he has realized he needs to learn how to dance to prove his social status and his marriageability. Capriol comments, “It is not without reason that games and dancing have formed part of the life of nations,” thereby relating dance practices within national belonging.⁴¹⁸ He continues, “but it has vexed me that dancing has been decried, even found paltry and considered as an effeminate exercise unworthy of

⁴¹⁶ Arbeau, *Orchesography*, trans. Cyril W. Beaumont, 130; see also G. Yvonne Kendall, *The Music of Arbeau’s Orchésographie* (Hillsdale, New York: Pendragon Press, 2013) 65-74.

⁴¹⁷ Kendall, *The Music of Arbeau’s Orchésographie*, 123, 128-129; 320-323.

⁴¹⁸ Arbeau, *Orchesography*, trans. Cyril W. Beaumont, 18.

the gravity of man.”⁴¹⁹ Capriol subsequently cites Cicero, Alfonso, King of Aragón, and Moses, as those who disapproved of dancing. As a student and a young man seeking to advance his social status, Capriol wants to learn to dance, but he remains concerned of authorities who would criticize or condemn the activity. Arbeau reassures Capriol, “there are an infinity of others who have praised and esteemed” dancing. He lists many names and geographic locations to support dance as a worthy endeavor, “so far as it is employed in fit place and season, without vicious abuse.”⁴²⁰ Arbeau lists many more names from Greek and Roman times, including the biblical names of King David and Moses. In this, he configures dance within Greek, Roman, and Christian heritages. He even notes, “In the primitive church, there was a custom, which has endured ... to sing the hymns of our faith while dancing,” implying that dancing is not inherently evil.⁴²¹

Arbeau then observes, “Indians worship the sun with dances. And those who have voyaged to newly discovered lands report that the savages dance when the sun appears on the horizon.”⁴²² By Indians, he means the peoples located in the East Indies, and for peoples in “newly discovered lands,” he means indigenous Americans. Paul Scolieri argues convincingly that Arbeau had reports from the Americas in mind, including Spanish chronicles of Aztec rituals.⁴²³ Arbeau continues listing more names from Greek and Roman history, as well as how, even in their time, royalty sponsors and encourages dancing for occasions of state. In this lengthy justification, Arbeau makes an argument

⁴¹⁹ Arbeau, *Orchesography*, trans. Cyril W. Beaumont, 18.

⁴²⁰ Arbeau, *Orchesography*, trans. Cyril W. Beaumont, 22.

⁴²¹ Arbeau, *Orchesography*, trans. Cyril W. Beaumont, 19; see also Capriol “for one can take honest pleasure without indulging in lewdness or evil practices” (20).

⁴²² Arbeau, *Orchesography*, trans. Cyril W. Beaumont, 19.

⁴²³ Paul A. Scolieri, *Dancing the New World: Aztecs, Spaniards, and the Choreography of Conquest* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2013) 12-13; see especially 60-62 on the Florentine Codex and Aztec rituals related to the sun.

for the global significance of dancing to all people in all locations. He insists, nearly every people in every location in the world uses dancing, *nearly* every people and location, because Arbeau does not list or refer to any location in continental Africa.

As their dialogue continues, Arbeau defines what he means by dancing:

to jump, to hop, to prance, to sway, to tread, to tip-toe, and to move
the feet, hands, and body in certain rhythms, measures, and
movements consisting of jumps, bendings of the body, straddlings,
limpings, bendings of the knees, risings on tip-toe, throwings-forward
of the feet, changes and other movements⁴²⁴

Arbeau's vocabulary here focuses largely on steps and gestures from the legs and feet. He has not articulated the upward and outward centered movement, which we will see in the Baroque period.⁴²⁵ To substantiate his definition, he names sources from classical Greece and Rome for these descriptions, including Greek scholars and rhetoricians like Lucian of Samosata and Julius Pollux.⁴²⁶ Capriol indicates that he recalls reading their works, which would have been a part of a humanist liberal arts education, but he says, "I wish to learn what steps and movements they used."⁴²⁷ Capriol wants to read of the dancing, so that he himself can learn it, but the ancient authorities did not describe enough detail for him to understand *what happened*.

Arbeau reassures Capriol, "either the passing of time or the idleness of man, or the difficulty of describing them, has resulted in their being lost."⁴²⁸ Because of this, the ancient dances "are no

⁴²⁴ Arbeau, *Orchesography*, trans. Cyril W. Beaumont, 20.

⁴²⁵ His illustrated figures are much the same, with very little emphasis on the arms moving out and up.

⁴²⁶ Arbeau, *Orchesography*, trans. Cyril W. Beaumont, 20-21.

⁴²⁷ Arbeau, *Orchesography*, trans. Cyril W. Beaumont, 21.

⁴²⁸ Arbeau, *Orchesography*, trans. Cyril W. Beaumont, 21.

longer in fashion.”⁴²⁹ Capriol, rather than being reassured, expresses concern that future generations will no longer be able to access or learn the dances Arbeau himself knows. He laments, “those who come after us will be ignorant of all these new dances you have just named, for the same reason that we have no knowledge of those of former times.”⁴³⁰ Unlike the fifteenth-century Italian dancing masters Capriol and Arbeau have not taken time to justify dancing as knowledge. Capriol’s despair shows that both men have always already taken dancing as knowledge worthy of recording and preserving. Later on, Capriol places dancing as one of the seven liberal arts, and Arbeau agrees, relating dancing immediately to music and rhythm.⁴³¹ Over a century after Domenico, Guglielmo, and Cornazano fought to justify dancing within the humanist course of education, a Jesuit priest writes of dancing always already within the liberal arts and true knowledge.

Capriol implores Arbeau, “It is surely in your power to repair” a potentially ignorant future.⁴³² He insists, “Set down in writing how I can achieve this polite art.”⁴³³ Capriol expresses a correlation between writing, imagination, and motivation to movement. If Arbeau writes, then as he writes, he “will seem to be surrounded by ... friends”⁴³⁴ from his past. By writing of dancing, as he learned it and to teach it to others, Arbeau will connect with events of and people from his own youth. Capriol further observes, “it will be difficult for you to abstain from moving your limbs in order to teach me.”⁴³⁵ He means that Arbeau, in the process of writing, will also model the

⁴²⁹ Arbeau, *Orchesography*, trans. Cyril W. Beaumont, 21.

⁴³⁰ Arbeau, *Orchesography*, trans. Cyril W. Beaumont, 21-22.

⁴³¹ Arbeau, *Orchesography*, trans. Cyril W. Beaumont, 22.

⁴³² Arbeau, *Orchesography*, trans. Cyril W. Beaumont, 22.

⁴³³ Arbeau, *Orchesography*, trans. Cyril W. Beaumont, 22.

⁴³⁴ Arbeau, *Orchesography*, trans. Cyril W. Beaumont, 22.

⁴³⁵ Arbeau, *Orchesography*, trans. Cyril W. Beaumont, 22.

movements for his student. As Taylor observes, “Writing ... was primarily a prompt to performance.”⁴³⁶ Capriol relates the written formation of imagined dancing bodies towards Arbeau’s ability to access the past, as a prompt to perform and teach in the present.

Yet, because of Arbeau’s age and because of the significance of not losing dance practices to failing memory or inadequate means of description, Capriol wants the writing to stand alone. He remarks that Arbeau’s “writing is such that in your absence, a pupil studying your counsels and precepts in the seclusion of his chamber, could perform the movements.”⁴³⁷ While Arbeau, as the dance master in the dialogue, holds the knowledge to teach dancing, the purpose of orchesography is to write and describe the dances so as to communicate *how* to dance through writing. Arbeau wants his treatise to commit embodied memory into writing, and accordingly, undertakes his lengthy explanation of steps and gestures, music and rhythms for 47 named dances from across Europe.

By alluding to the Americas and Asia, albeit briefly, Arbeau’s treatise is the first written source focusing on European dancing to also imply dancing occurs around the world.⁴³⁸ While his definition of dancing does not include technical vocabulary or the dense philosophical rationale written in the previous century, Arbeau deploys imagined savage dancing bodies to re-center imagined dancing bodies in European borders. When he describes the dance called Canaries, he observes, “Some say that this dance comes from the Canary Isles, and that it is regularly practised there.”⁴³⁹ But, Arbeau does not agree with this theory. Instead, he agrees with those who “hold that it is derived from a ballet composed for a masquerade in which the dancers were dressed as kings

⁴³⁶ Taylor, *The Archive and the Repertoire*, 17.

⁴³⁷ Arbeau, *Orchesography*, trans. Cyril W. Beaumont, 22.

⁴³⁸ As Scolieri shows, the Spanish and Nahua chroniclers wrote extensively about indigenous American dancing.

⁴³⁹ Arbeau, *Orchesography*, trans. Cyril W. Beaumont, 150.

and queens of Mauretania.”⁴⁴⁰ Marina Nordera explains, a masquerade was “a parade or a stage action, for the most part improvised, and executed by characters who are dressed up or wearing masks.”⁴⁴¹ Accordingly, “the dramatic content was limited and rather basic,” because “the main purpose was to create a spectacular impression by using lavish costumes and accessories.”⁴⁴² Arbeau elaborates on the spectacle designed for “kings and queens of Mauretania,” which meant they were dressed “like savages with plumes dyed in various colors.”⁴⁴³ When he describes the dancing, he emphasizes, “these passages are lively, yet strange and fantastic, resembling in large measure the dances of savages.”⁴⁴⁴

Arbeau’s imagined savage dancing bodies now included kings and queens from Mauretania, the name of northwestern Africa in Roman times and the name whose root, *mauri*, lies under the related word *Mauri* or *Moor*.⁴⁴⁵ These savages, however, were dressed with feathers, a decoration introduced by the writings on and by indigenous Mesoamericans, as well as performances in Europe by indigenous Americans from central and South America.⁴⁴⁶ And the name of the dance itself, or masquerade, located the Canary Islands, a Spanish colonial holding since the fifteenth century. The first time imagined dancing bodies with African heritages appear in European-language dance manual, they come from a territory in North Africa which, in ancient times, supplied mercenaries

⁴⁴⁰ Arbeau, *Orchesography*, trans. Cyril W. Beaumont, 150.

⁴⁴¹ Nordera, “Ballet de cour,” in *The Cambridge Companion to Ballet*, 293 fn 14.

⁴⁴² Nordera, “Ballet de cour,” in *The Cambridge Companion to Ballet*, 293 fn 14.

⁴⁴³ Arbeau, *Orchesography*, trans. Cyril W. Beaumont, 150.

⁴⁴⁴ Arbeau, *Orchesography*, trans. Cyril W. Beaumont, 150-151.

⁴⁴⁵ Harris, *Aztecs, Moors, and Christians: Festivals of Reconquest in Mexico and Spain* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2000) 44; Brackett, “Race and Rulership: Alessandro de’Medici,” in *Black Africans in Renaissance Europe*, 303 fn 2.

⁴⁴⁶ Scolieri, *Dancing the New World*, 66, 68, 74. Harris, *Festivals of Reconquest*, 87, 100, 105, 166, 173.

and archers to the Roman army.⁴⁴⁷ And in the sixteenth century, this same region meant a territory ruled by Muslims. They also come from a sixteenth-century Spanish colony off the coast of Africa, whose people, since the late fifteenth century, were sold and enslaved into southern Europe.⁴⁴⁸

Yet Arbeau disqualifies the dance as anything other than a *European* masquerade, evoking exotic lands with its “stamping steps,” “heel and foot tapping, high leg lifts, and scraping the foot along the floor.”⁴⁴⁹ None of the multiple and overlapping imagined dancing bodies from continental Africa and the Americas qualify as carrying knowledge of this dance. Only imagined dancing bodies from Europe, regardless of from where they learned feather decoration or from where they learned to stamp to “dotted rhythms,” qualify to carry knowledge of these practices in writing. That is, while Arbeau may have known and consulted reports on the Americas and Africa, he does not cite or refer to them, subsuming his source for this knowledge through an imagined dancing body within European borders. Thus, it is not only that Arbeau’s 47 dances focus primarily on imagined dancing bodies *from* and *in* Europe, but how the accumulation of these dances continuously re-center and make present imagined dancing bodies as a source of *knowledge* about Europe.

Put another way, only imagined dancing bodies from Europe qualify as sources through which to write embodied memory and preserve it for the future. Only imagined dancing bodies from Europe qualify to remember and narrate *that which is said to have happened* on the dance floor. Only imagined dancing bodies from Europe qualify to bring knowledge of savage and exotic bodies into the written record. And by writing dance as embodied memory, with global potential as situated within and qualified through European belonging, Arbeau’s treatise foreshadows the Baroque

⁴⁴⁷ Harris, *Festivals of Reconquest*, 44.

⁴⁴⁸ Thomas, *The Slave Trade: The Story of the Atlantic Slave Trade: 1440-1870*, 76, 332.

⁴⁴⁹ Lynn Matluck Brooks, *The Art of Dancing in Seventeenth-Century Spain: Juan de Esquivel Navarro and His World* (Lewisburg: Bucknell University Press, 2003) 137.

instantiation of an imagined Europeanist dancing body through “pure space and absolute viewpoint.”⁴⁵⁰

Nearly a hundred years later, when Claude-François Ménéstrier wrote his historical narrative, he qualified ballet as a modern dance practice. In the humanist tradition, he positioned ballet as both the descendant of dancing from ancient Greece and Rome, and something new. He defines ballet in contrast to “le simple danse,” or “pure dance,” lacking expression and thematic harmony. For Ménéstrier, “pure dance is movement which expresses nothing, observing only an accurate cadence with the sound of the instruments by means of simple and figured steps and phrases.”⁴⁵¹ Pure dance consists of steps and phrases to music and rhythm, without revealing or enacting anything of use. In contrast, “the ballet expresses, according to Aristotle, the actions, manners, and feelings of human beings.” Specifically, as Judith Rock observes, “ballet ... expresses not only how things look and how they are arranged, but also, by its movement, expresses their soul, or *inner* nature.”⁴⁵² Ballet showed the inner nature of human beings through “figure, gesture, and movement,” arranged within “a drawing together of story, example, and imagination.”⁴⁵³ Ballet was therefore instructive and edifying, beyond just a collection of steps and gestures to selected musical rhythms.

Going even further, Ménéstrier locates ballet within the apparatus of the nation-state. He writes, “We no longer dance as part of our religious practices ... as do the infidels.”⁴⁵⁴ Instead, in France, “we content ourselves with creating honest theatrical presentations which form the body to

⁴⁵⁰ Foster, “Muscle/Memories,” in *Rhythms of the Afro-Atlantic World*, 124-125, 133-134, fn 8.

⁴⁵¹ Qotd in Judith Rock, “Terpsichore at Louis le Grand: Baroque Dance on a Jesuit Stage in Paris,” (PhD diss., University of California at Berkeley, 1988) 43.

⁴⁵² Rock, “Terpsichore at Louis le Grand,” 37.

⁴⁵³ Rock, “Terpsichore at Louis le Grand,” 42.

⁴⁵⁴ Qotd in Rock, “Terpsichore at Louis le Grand,” 36.

noble action and decorum.”⁴⁵⁵ The purpose of using “figure, gesture, and movement” to express the inner soul of human beings was to motivate “noble action and decorum.” Here again, we have the significance of an imagined noble dancing body, specifically in the French court. This imagined and noble dancing body enacts the ideal human according to humanist interpretations of classical principles and French decorum. Ménestrier further emphasizes, “We present [ballets] in public celebrations, and often under the veil of ingenious allegories representing the events which create the well-being of the state.”⁴⁵⁶ As Nordera explains, ballet narratives were “drawn from the mythological universe or medieval romances.”⁴⁵⁷ Not only does Ménestrier’s imagined dancing body enact and motivate noble decorum by expressing the ideal human, his imagined dancing body also authenticates seventeenth-century France within an allegorical ancient-medieval-modern narrative. Ménestrier’s ideally imagined human, through dancing, furthered a historiographic presence of France within Europe.

Written differently, in official historical narratives, the knowledge embodied in dance performances served to legitimate national and political projects. Nordera concurs, noting, “Each ballet de cour has its origin in a celebration of a specific event or occasion in the life of the court and in particular the royal family.”⁴⁵⁸ So, for instance, Ménestrier qualified the 1581 *Balet comique de la Royne* or *Allegorie de Circé* as the first official ballet.⁴⁵⁹ Catherine de’Medici, as Queen consort of France, sponsored this ballet to honor the wedding of Duc de Joyeuse to Marguerite de Lorraine.⁴⁶⁰

⁴⁵⁵ Qotd in Rock, “Terpsichore at Louis le Grand,” 36.

⁴⁵⁶ Qotd in Rock, “Terpsichore at Louis le Grand,” 36.

⁴⁵⁷ Nordera, “Ballet de cour,” in *The Cambridge Companion to Ballet*, 19.

⁴⁵⁸ Nordera, “Ballet de cour,” in *The Cambridge Companion to Ballet*, 28-29.

⁴⁵⁹ Nordera, “Ballet de cour,” in *The Cambridge Companion to Ballet*, 28-29.

⁴⁶⁰ Nordera, “Ballet de cour,” in *The Cambridge Companion to Ballet*, 28-29.

Nordera further remarks, “The allegorical or mythological narratives are elaborated in such a way as to convey the significant elements which recall the precise social or political events.”⁴⁶¹ Thus, when Jules Mazarin, the Prime Minister for Louis XIV, sponsored *Le Ballet de la Nuit*, the performance “resolv[ed] in the grand ballet which depicted the glorious rising of the sun following the events of the night.”⁴⁶² And, since Louis XIV’s “most famous identification was with the Greek sun-god Apollo,” then “the rising symbolized the rising of the King, le Roi Soleil.”⁴⁶³

Nordera elaborates on the historiographic position of the 1581 *Balet comique de la Royne*. This particular ballet attained significance as the *first* or *original* from Ménestrier. But its position as the original has persisted based on “the qualitative and quantitative wealth of sources which document it,” as well as because “its evolution coincides with the political apogee of the French court,” and “represents a key moment in the historiographical project, which claims the noble origins of classical ballet legitimate it as the highest form of dance.”⁴⁶⁴ In other words, because a wealth of sources related to this particular ballet were purposefully preserved and archived, the *Balet comique de la Royne* moved from an event into a fact available for future recollection. This particular ballet also marks the ascendance of French politics and the French court, “an object of many studies, because of the important place which the Sun King and his entourage occupy in French history.”⁴⁶⁵ The French

⁴⁶¹ Nordera, “Ballet de cour,” in *The Cambridge Companion to Ballet*, 19.

⁴⁶² Wendy Hilton, *Dance of Court & Theater: The French Noble Style 1690-1725* (Princeton: Princeton Book Company, Publishers, 1981) 7.

⁴⁶³ Hilton, *Dance of Court & Theater*, 7.

⁴⁶⁴ Nordera, “Ballet de cour,” in *The Cambridge Companion to Ballet*, 25.

⁴⁶⁵ Nordera, “Ballet de cour,” in *The Cambridge Companion to Ballet*, 25.

court was not only important nationally, but regionally and continentally, “serving as a model to lesser courts in Germany and other European countries.”⁴⁶⁶

When Ménestrier located the 1581 *Balet comique de la Roynne* as the original, he generated a narrative of French innovation, which concurred with and amplified Louis XIV’s vision “that the French court be the most brilliant and influential in Europe.”⁴⁶⁷ By configuring ballet as a modern descendant of ancient practices, Ménestrier legitimated his ideally imagined and noble dancing body, a dancing body emblematic of French desires for European dominance, as an innovative and superior source for historical knowledge. In these ways, he fashioned a source deserving of its own historical narrative, and centered the decorum of an imagined noble and French dancing body within European politics. In doing so, Ménestrier located the widespread Italian influences as predecessors in the past, not yet qualified as ballet.

Thus, despite the extensive presence of Italian artists in the French court, including but not limited to the dancing masters, technicians, and scenic artists brought in by Catherine de’Medici,⁴⁶⁸ the pre-eminent opera composer of the seventeenth century, Jean-Baptiste Lully (born as Giovanni Battista Lulli in Florence),⁴⁶⁹ and the commedia dell’arte troupes, which became the Comédie Italienne at the Hôtel de Bourgogne,⁴⁷⁰ ballet became written knowledge of French decorum

⁴⁶⁶ Nordera, “Ballet de cour,” in *The Cambridge Companion to Ballet*, 25.

⁴⁶⁷ Hilton, *Dance of Court & Theatre*, 9.

⁴⁶⁸ Nordera, “Ballet de Cour,” in *The Cambridge Companion to Ballet*, 21.

⁴⁶⁹ Hilton, *Dance of Court & Theatre*, 23-24.

⁴⁷⁰ Harris-Warrick and Marsh, *Musical Theatre at the Court of Louis XIV*, 10-13.

reverberating out to the rest of Europe.⁴⁷¹ The imagined ballet body became a source of Europeanist knowledge centered on and emanating from the French court. The presence of France implied a presence of Europe, effectively silencing the extra-national and European influences on French ballet and subsuming *embodied* knowledge of Europe under the French court.

In support of the importance of ballet to his vision of rule, Louis XIV “found[ed] the Académie Royale de Danse, to improve the level of amateur and professional dancing, and to establish scientific principles for the art.”⁴⁷² Dancing masters advocated for this academy, so as to gain independence from the Musicians’ Guild. Pierre Beauchamps, prior to becoming the director of the Académie Royale de Danse, “composed dance tunes as well as creating choreographies for production with both the composer Jean-Baptiste Lully and the playwright Molière.”⁴⁷³ He developed “the five basic positions of the feet,” and the guidelines “for the regulation of the movements and positions of the arms.”⁴⁷⁴ In 1704, Beauchamps “lodged a complaint against the king’s council against two younger dancing masters, Raoul-Auger Feuillet and André Lorin.”⁴⁷⁵

⁴⁷¹ For an argument on ballet as Italian-innovation, see Barbara Sparti, “Dance and Historiography: *Le Ballet Comique de la Royne*, An Italian Perspective,” in *Medieval and Renaissance Studies in Memory of Ingrid Brainard*, eds. Ann Buckley and Cynthia J. Cyrus, 304-319. (Kalamazoo: Medieval Institute Publications, 2011).

⁴⁷² Hilton, *Dance of Court & Theatre*, 9; Sandra Noll Hammond, “The Rise of Ballet Technique and Training: The Professionalisation of an Art Form,” in *The Cambridge Companion to Ballet*, 66-67.

⁴⁷³ Hammond, “The Rise of Ballet Technique,” 66. Jean-Baptiste Lully, from Florence, was “the dominant figure in French music for thirty years,” from the 1650s to the 1680s. “Until his death in 1687, Lully composed approximately one opera a year for the Académie Royale de Musique.” See Harris-Warrick and Marsh, *Musical Theatre at the Court of Louis XIV*, 1, 3.

⁴⁷⁴ Hammond, “The Rise of Ballet Technique,” 66-67.

⁴⁷⁵ Harris-Warrick and Marsh, *Musical Theatre at the Court of Louis XIV*, 83. See also Hilton, *Dance of Court & Theatre*, 45-47.

Beauchamps claimed that he should receive credit for developing the system of dance notation published by Feuillet in *Chorégraphie, ou l'art de décrire la danse*. Beauchamps wanted the credit, so as to obtain the privilege to profit from publishing on the system.⁴⁷⁶ Under deposition, Beauchamps testified that Louis XIV “ordered him to ‘discover the means of making the art of dance comprehensible on paper.’”⁴⁷⁷ Beauchamps then described how he formed “characters and notes in the form of tablature in order to represent the steps of the dances and ballets performed before the king and at the Ópera.”⁴⁷⁸

Like Arbeau, Beauchamps wanted his system of notation to stand as detailed instructions, for the purpose of preserving knowledge of and teaching dances directly from written sources. And as Warrick-Harris and Marsh reveal, at least three other dancing masters in the late seventeenth century—André Lorin, Jean Favier, and Sieur De La Haise—sought to notate and preserve knowledge of specific dance performances, as well as acquire the privilege to profit from their system.⁴⁷⁹ Beauchamps, then, was not alone in his desire to codify dance practices as written embodied knowledge, for ease of preservation and teaching. Yet, the first published version of systematic dance notation, and the version which subsequently influenced dancing masters throughout Europe and the world, was Feuillet’s *Chorégraphie*. After Feuillet’s publication, “for the next twenty-two years annual publications of notated dances were eagerly sought by those wishing to study the latest choreographies from Paris.”⁴⁸⁰ Moving into the eighteenth century, “France, and specifically, Paris, was the acknowledged leader in the art of both social and theatrical dance in

⁴⁷⁶ Harris-Warrick and Marsh, *Musical Theatre at the Court of Louis XIV*, 83-84.

⁴⁷⁷ Harris-Warrick and Marsh, *Musical Theatre at the Court of Louis XIV*, 84.

⁴⁷⁸ Harris-Warrick and Marsh, *Musical Theatre at the Court of Louis XIV*, 84.

⁴⁷⁹ Harris-Warrick and Marsh, *Musical Theatre at the Court of Louis XIV*, 86-87.

⁴⁸⁰ Hammond, “The Rise of Ballet Technique and Training,” in *The Cambridge Companion to Ballet*, 68-69.

Europe.”⁴⁸¹ The demand for French dancing masters increased throughout Europe, as well as in the American colonies, and publications of dances based on Feuillet’s system, “provided teachers with new material ... to instruct their students and alerted practitioners to some of the latest fashions in art and dancing.”⁴⁸²

As both Susan Leigh Foster and Brenda Dixon Gottschild observe, the embodied and spatial implications of dance practices in this time period reflected European imperial and global desires. Foster specifically notes, “this regularization of dances so that they might travel and be reproduced ... profoundly influenced both the conceptualization of dancing and the categorization of diverse dances.”⁴⁸³ In other words, Feuillet’s system shifted which dance practices qualified as embodied knowledge worthy of being written down, preserved, and recollected for future historical narratives. The dance publications “do not adequately represent dancing on any of the various stages, whether the elite, licensed productions of Opera or the experiments with pantomime at the fair theatres.” Additionally, publications based on Feuillet’s system do not preserve or record “the kind of aesthetic traffic in styles and vocabularies proliferated by itinerant companies of dancers” throughout Europe.⁴⁸⁴

As Foster describes, Feuillet’s system deployed “a universal classificatory rubric,” by notating “symbols on either side of a continuous line, tracing the dancer’s pathways” so as to mark “the exact positions and motions of the feet.”⁴⁸⁵ That is, Feuillet and those who applied his system, “subjected

⁴⁸¹ Hammond, “The Rise of Ballet Technique and Training,” in *The Cambridge Companion to Ballet*, 69.

⁴⁸² Foster, “Choreographies and Choreographers,” in *Worlding Dance*, 101.

⁴⁸³ Foster, “Choreographies and Choreographers,” in *Worlding Dance*, 101.

⁴⁸⁴ Foster, “Choreographies and Choreographers,” in *Worlding Dance*, 100-101.

⁴⁸⁵ Foster, “Choreographies and Choreographers,” in *Worlding Dance*, 101.

dancing to laws that all movements appeared to share.”⁴⁸⁶ In these universalized laws of movement, “sinking, rising, and springing were measured in terms of the body’s vertical positioning,”⁴⁸⁷ legitimating verticality as a primary location of reference for a written and imagined dancing body. Emphasizing verticality also tracked the location of imagined dancing bodies through the sagittal and frontal planes, by enforcing an erect alignment of right and left, crown to foot. Additionally, “slidings and turning marked [the body’s] horizontal progress through space,”⁴⁸⁸ tracking the progress of imagined dancing bodies according to a transversal plane perpendicular to the vertical planes. This, “disembodied synthesis of pure space and absolute viewpoint worked effectively to rationalize the colonial project.”⁴⁸⁹

In other words, “Through notation, the body’s motions were thereby removed from their locale and cast into the space of pure geometry.”⁴⁹⁰ Straight and erect imagined dancing bodies executed movements and rhythms as a decorous belonging *within* and *from* Europe. Notation activated a limited knowledge of dancing as a source of what it meant to move and look like a Europeanist body *in motion*. By working with dance notation as sources for movements and rhythms, dance masters facilitated the circulation of this knowledge beyond European borders. Ballet, as embodied knowledge of what it meant to move like a European, forged an imagined and Europeanist dancing body enacting noble decorum, as the ideal human centered in the French court.

⁴⁸⁶ Foster, “Choreographies and Choreographers,” in *Worlding Dance*, 101.

⁴⁸⁷ Foster, “Choreographies and Choreographers,” in *Worlding Dance*, 101.

⁴⁸⁸ Foster, “Choreographies and Choreographers,” in *Worlding Dance*, 101.

⁴⁸⁹ Foster, “Muscle/Memories,” in *Rhythms of the Afro-Atlantic World*, 133-134, see fn 8.

⁴⁹⁰ Foster, “Choreographies and Choreographers,” in *Worlding Dance*, 101.

Any deviation indicated an imagined dancing body which failed in adhering to “an absolute set of laws to which all bodies should conform.”⁴⁹¹ Deviant difference indicated a failure to move in ways qualified as dance, as well as a disqualification from being written as dancing and from being preserved in relation to legitimated archives of dance and ballet. “Implementing these geometric laws of movement, the cultural specificities of particular dances were smoothed out or erased.”⁴⁹² Thus, “What had been a region’s indigenous production was transformed into stylistic features of a single repertoire that set one dance apart from another.”⁴⁹³ Dance masters deployed their reflective rubric by transposing regional dances into Europeanist dancing space. This enabled dance masters to map regional repertoires onto those performers who enacted the Europeanist dancing body onstage. The capability of European dance masters to transpose dances from regions of settlement into court and theatrical performance forged newly global and universally danced movements by appropriating and altering deviant difference for European court and theatre performance. The Europeanist dancing body displaced indecorous and conquered imagined dancing bodies, both in writing and in performance. The imagined Europeanist dancing body facilitated a globalized future with regional variety, and without deviance, for consumption and speculation.

From this point forward, based on the accumulation and preservation of written and imagined dancing bodies from within European borders, dance lived in historical worlds as choreographed and structured knowledge of a particular kind of performance event in Europe, which silenced knowledge of dancing and danced events from other aspects of European life and culture, as well as silencing knowledge of dancing and danced events from other locations in the world. The embodied-spatial whole of Europeanist belonging, through a narrow range of court and

⁴⁹¹ Foster, “Muscle/Memories,” in *Rhythms of the Afro-Atlantic World*, 133-134, fn 8.

⁴⁹² Foster, “Choreographies and Choreographers,” in *Worlding Dance*, 101.

⁴⁹³ Foster, “Choreographies and Choreographers,” in *Worlding Dance*, 101.

theatrical repertoires, became the reflective rubric against which all other imagined dancing bodies were measured and consumed. The closer the dance came to the vertical and upward, *neutralized* core, the more closely the archives composed it as belonging from and within European territories. What happened on the dance floor evoked and proved geographic or territorial belonging. The quality and timing of movements and steps through dancing space reflected against or in agreement with the imagined Europeanist dancing body, as centered in the French court and then mapped continentally and globally.

MAPPING SILENCE

In this section, I return to the *moresca*, to map the implications of confining embodied knowledge of this dance within Europe prior to the documented emergence of a codified and imagined Europeanist dancing body. Through the *moresca*, I consider how legitimated narratives, produced through a historical process, invite us to imagine how dancing bodies and repertoires travel, over space and time. In turn, I will demonstrate how this imaginary works within the compositional parameters established more than a century *after* the *morris* and *moresca* appear in written, European-language sources. In this section, I examine how Trouillot's fourth step, "the moment of retrospective significance (the making of *history* in the final instance)," overlaps with the first step, "the moment of fact creation (the making of sources)," and how power reconstitutes itself in attempts for "the production of a 'better' history, simply by an enlargement of the empirical base."⁴⁹⁴ Even when adding new sources and time periods into the scope of legitimated history, the imagined

⁴⁹⁴ Trouillot, *Silencing the Past*, 48.

principal dancing body of historiographic belonging remains moving within and from Europe, and then out to the rest of the world.

Max Harris begins with the earliest sources, because he also examines sources on staged spectacles of mock combat. The spectacles sometimes included dancing and usually re-enactments of famous battles with European victors. If we visualize Harris's map, the first qualified *moros y cristianos* appears in thirteenth century Aragón-Catalunya (what is now northeast Spain) to commemorate the Day of Santiago. While Harris mentions sources for earlier mock battles in the same region, he questions the extent to which dancing enacted a combat narrative between Moorish and Christian characters. That is, within the sources, he finds some evidence of "festive combat" and "mock battles and tournaments," or "large-scale battle plays modeled ... on ... tournament *mêlées*" and "mimicry by a minstrel troupe."⁴⁹⁵ Mock combat or "large-scale battle plays" appear, without dancing and without clear Moors versus Christians narratives, in tenth-century Byzantium, eleventh-century Bamberg, twelfth-century Sicily, thirteenth-century Riga, and fourteenth-century Paris.⁴⁹⁶ He finds other references to "armies being marshaled" in the "form of a liturgical drama."⁴⁹⁷ But for Harris, these performance events are not near enough to the large-scale epics, with both dancing and mock combat, which characterize *moros y cristianos*.

In thirteenth-century Zaragoza, however, the nobles of Aragón staged a *moros y cristianos* for King Jaume II in the Moorish *Aljafería*.⁴⁹⁸ Harris qualifies this as a *moros y cristianos* based on the overall narrative structure and the performance modes included within: "the Moors would have

⁴⁹⁵ Harris, *Aztecs, Moors, and Christians*, 34-35.

⁴⁹⁶ Harris, *Aztecs, Moors, and Christians*, 34, 35, 41.

⁴⁹⁷ Harris, *Aztecs, Moors, and Christians*, 35. See also Harris, 41, "few of these performances concerned themselves with conflict between Muslims and Christians."

⁴⁹⁸ *Aljafería* sometimes called "Spain's first permanent indoor theater." Harris, *Aztecs, Moors, and Christians*, 37.

won the first battle, setting up a Christian victory, emblematic of the advancing reconquest, in the second.”⁴⁹⁹ The festivities included mock battles on horseback, and ended with a “closing dance” between converted Moors and Christians.⁵⁰⁰ After this event, Harris locates another *moros y cristianos* in fifteenth-century Barcelona, within “a series of processional dances and pageants” for Corpus Christi.⁵⁰¹ In this annual event, entitled *Martyrdom of Saint Sebastian*, “knights rode hobby horses ... and Muslims were designated as Turks.”⁵⁰² Other cities in Aragón-Catalunya also staged *moros y cristianos* within Corpus Christi processions, including Igualada, Valencia, and Mallorca.

The first mention of a *moros y cristianos* outside of Aragón-Catalunya comes from the mid-fifteenth century kingdom of Naples. Alfonso the Magnanimous of Aragón conquered the kingdom of Naples in 1442, and then executed a formal triumphal entry in 1443. The celebrations and festivities included Moorish and Christian knights engaged in mock combat on hobby horses, and accompanying banquets and festivities. The second mention of a *moros y cristianos* outside of Aragón-Catalunya comes from late fifteenth-century Jaén in Andalucía, or what is now south-central Spain. In the fifteenth century, Jaén was located near the border with Granada, the last remaining Moorish-held territory in the Iberian peninsula. The governor of this territory, Miguel Lucas de Iranzo, staged several *juegos de cañas*, or games of canes, war games and military exercises. The games included combatants dressing as either Moors or Christians, narratives affirming the Christian god’s superiority over the Muslim god, and baptismal conversions of Moorish characters. After the

⁴⁹⁹ Harris, *Aztecs, Moors, and Christians*, 37-38.

⁵⁰⁰ Harris, *Aztecs, Moors, and Christians*, 37-38.

⁵⁰¹ Harris, *Aztecs, Moors, and Christians*, 43.

⁵⁰² Harris, *Aztecs, Moors, and Christians*, 43.

games concluded with Moorish submission, the performers returned to banquets and feasts with celebratory dancing.⁵⁰³

After this, Harris finds scattered mentions of *moros y cristianos*: one in 1472, at an *entremés* performed in Valencia; one at a “Portuguese royal wedding in 1490”; the 1493 celebrations in Gerona, after the fall of Granada; and one in 1513 Valladolid, in which Ferdinand and Isabella’s grandson participated.⁵⁰⁴ Prior to encounters and conquests in the Americas, then, Harris finds very few mentions of *moros y cristianos*, which were explicitly staged battles between Moorish and Christian characters, and with dancing as a central form of performance and celebration. Based on this, Harris concludes “there are too few known accounts of mock battles between Moors and Christians in medieval Spain for us to speak of an already long-established tradition at the time of the conquest of America.”⁵⁰⁵ He sets this up, in order to examine mock combat and dancing in Mexica cultures prior to European arrivals on American shores.

Based on Harris’s work, mock combat appears in several European locations without dancing and without explicit reference to Moors and Christians: Byzantium, northern Bavaria, Sicily, the Baltic Sea, and Paris. Repeated sources on *moros y cristianos* combat, with dancing, appear in regions ruled by Aragón-Catalunya from the thirteenth to the fifteenth century. These *moros y cristianos* occur in the context of royal visits or banquets, as well as Corpus Christi processions. Harris then maps these in relation to Mexica mock combat, occurring simultaneously and in isolation, until 1492.⁵⁰⁶ From this framework, Harris asks his readers to imagine staged battles and

⁵⁰³ Harris, *Aztecs, Moors, and Christians*, 54-59.

⁵⁰⁴ Harris, *Aztecs, Moors, and Christians*, 60-61.

⁵⁰⁵ Harris, *Aztecs, Moors, and Christians*, 61.

⁵⁰⁶ Harris, *Aztecs, Moors, and Christians*, 67-114.

dances in two primary locations: the northeastern Iberian peninsula (reaching into southern Italy) and central America, until the two practices meet in the late fifteenth century.

After the 1492 moment, Harris maps indigenous American mobility into Spain. He finds *moros y cristianos* proliferate across the Atlantic in correlation to Spanish and indigenous American contact and exchange. He maps *moros y cristianos* in Mexico, or New Spain as it was known then, in Mexico City, Tlaxcala, and along the coast of the Yucatán.⁵⁰⁷ He also maps *moros y cristianos* throughout sixteenth-century Europe, including but not limited to, Toledo, Naples, Trent, Binche, Rouen, Nuremberg, Andalucía, and Valencia. All of these locations, except for Rouen, were ruled by a Spanish monarch at the time of the documented *moros y cristianos* performances analyzed by Harris.⁵⁰⁸ By taking this tactic, Harris relates the sixteenth-century wave of sources on *moros y cristianos* to Spanish conquests in the Americas and to Spanish imperial rule in Europe. Along the way, he further mentions sword dances, or dances of mock combat, like the *moresca* in Europe, as integral to the *moros y cristianos* structure.⁵⁰⁹ He only includes this specific dance in the early sixteenth century, leaving us to wonder how or if early *moros y cristianos* included dancing similar to Italian and English sources on the *moresca* and *morris*.

If we only read Harris's scholarship, our imaginary map of combat dances, within *moros y cristianos*, begins in what is now northeastern Spain and central America. Harris qualifies imagined Spanish dancing bodies and imagined indigenous American dancing bodies to carry, transmit, and influence development of how to stage elaborate combat spectacles, with dancing as a central and integral mode of performance. Dancing bodies moving into and out of both indigenous American and Spanish courts would be qualified as credible carriers and transmitters of danced knowledge to

⁵⁰⁷ Harris, *Aztecs, Moors, and Christians*, 117-170.

⁵⁰⁸ Harris, *Aztecs, Moors, and Christians*, 173-234.

⁵⁰⁹ See, in particular, Harris, *Aztecs, Moors, and Christians*, 200, 229.

all other locations. Sixteenth-century Rouen, for instance, even though not ruled by a Spanish monarch, functioned as a significant port entry for goods from South America. It fits in Harris's map by virtue of European-American exchanges, and the battle spectacle staged between Tabayaras and Tupinambas, as played with fifty Brazilian performers and 250 French performers with trade ties to South American regions. Harris's map enables us to ask not only where did Spaniards take their traditions of battle and dancing, but where and when did indigenous Americans take their traditions of battle and dancing? And, moreover, what happened when these dance and battle practices met, in both Europe and the Americas?

Now, I'll move from Harris's map of Spain's influence in Europe and the Americas, to Forrest's examination of the English morris in relation to European tournament practices and Italian dancing. The globe spins from Spain, north to England. In England, sources on morris dancing appear in the mid-fifteenth century. But Forrest also considers tournament and mock combat influences from earlier time periods, arguing for three primary routes of development after the fifteenth century: court, urban processions, and the grounds of rural churches or parishes.

In England, the earliest records come from the fifteenth-century Tudor court, where morrises usually appear connected to festivities of Christmas or Shrovetide, as well as marriages and royal visits. Forrest examines how tournaments changed "from pure combat to a more stylized entertainment, which eventually found its way indoors," with the gradual addition of constructed scenic elements and narrated or mimed action.⁵¹⁰ The combat between a challenger and a defender, usually in relation to a lady and her noble mission, was followed by feasting and dancing, which could include social partner dances and the morris dance. Within the morris dance itself, performers could enact a narrative involving "a costumed procession, a contention, a prize-giving, and a general

⁵¹⁰ John Forrest, *The History of Morris Dancing*, 61-63.

dance,” with two ladies, six knights, and a fool.⁵¹¹ That is, “the dances themselves [were] vehicles of narrative meaning.”⁵¹²

In some sources, morris dances appear next to disguisings, along with admonitions to nobles that they must always wear masks to perform morris dances. Forrest attributes this to the athletic choreography, which displayed the performer’s agility, and which in turn, accentuated the customary small bells on performers’ costumes. He notes morris dancing could, “involve violent, often competitive exercises, in which grace may give way to rude and grotesque action.”⁵¹³ He substantiates the use of *grotesque* by analyzing sculpted and drawn morris dancers as “contorted or twisted in some way,” and with blackening or masking devices, such as gauze.⁵¹⁴ Going further, Forrest considers sources in Italy, as well, such as two *moresche* in Urbino, 1513, one about Jason and one about Venus; as well as *moresche* performed in interludes between plays at Italian courts.⁵¹⁵ In both England and Italy, “the actual use of Moors as characters in the dance is conspicuously rare,” however, “the characters are ... representative of the non-Christian worlds: Jews, pagans, barbarians, Turks.”⁵¹⁶

From a variety of sources in the late fifteenth and early sixteenth century, then, Forrest asks us to imagine dancing bodies primarily in the English court. He focuses on Tudor courts, but indicates a wider European circulation and kinship, in how dances like the *moresca* were performed in Italy. Namely, he relates tournament competition to chivalric narratives, and the enactment of a

⁵¹¹ Forrest, *The History of Morris Dancing*, 65, 90.

⁵¹² Forrest, *The History of Morris Dancing*, 90.

⁵¹³ Forrest, *The History of Morris Dancing*, 91.

⁵¹⁴ Forrest, *The History of Morris Dancing*, 77, 78, 80, 82.

⁵¹⁵ Forrest, *The History of Morris Dancing*, 74-77, 87-91.

⁵¹⁶ Forrest, *The History of Morris Dancing*, 89.

morris or moresca to athletic repertoires perhaps more suited for the battlefield. Moreover, he relates the name of the dance to “remote and exotic worlds at the fringes of Europe” and “grotesque imagery,” implying but not explicitly stating that the competition narratives focused on European versus non-European contests.⁵¹⁷ This connection further implies that performers relied on masking to enact the Turks, barbarians, or Moors, and athletic prowess indicated non-European excess in danced movement.⁵¹⁸ He concludes by noting the various branches of morris development as the sixteenth century continued, namely, “its transformation into early forms of ballet” and “a standard feature of the grotesqueries of the antimasque.”⁵¹⁹ Overall, the morris “became the source of inspiration for a number of dance types outside the courtly sphere.”⁵²⁰

Moving into the middle of the sixteenth century, Forrest addresses the morris in relation to urban processions in London, notably at Midsummer and Midwinter festivities, as well as the May games. In other cities and towns, later in the sixteenth century, morris dancing appears in relation to guild sponsorships and accounts, such as the ledgers of the Tailors’ guild in Salisbury.⁵²¹ Mentions of morris dancing occur sporadically in other cities and towns, such as those in Edinburgh and Wells,

⁵¹⁷ Forrest, *The History of Morris Dancing*, 89.

⁵¹⁸ See Forrest, *The History of Morris Dancing*, 175: “these [moresca] leaps were so vigorous,” the dialogue of a farce claimed ‘morisque’ performers would be barred from heaven, “because their movements will break through the floor.” Forrest cites Howard Mayer Brown’s translation in *Music in the French Secular Theater, 1400-1550* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1963) 162; See Anthony M. Cummings, “Dance and ‘The Other’: The Moresca,” in *Seventeenth-Century Ballet, A Multi-Art Spectacle: An International Interdisciplinary Symposium*, ed. Barbara Grammeniat, (Bloomington, Indiana: Xlibris Corporation, 2011) 47-48 (39-60); and Robert Hornback, “‘Extravagant and Wheeling Strangers’: Early Blackface Dancing Fools, Racial Impersonation, and the Limits of Identification,” in *Exemplaria* 20:2 (2013): 197-222.

⁵¹⁹ Forrest, *The History of Morris Dancing*, 91.

⁵²⁰ Forrest, *The History of Morris Dancing*, 91.

⁵²¹ Forrest, *The History of Morris Dancing*, 117-124.

revealing what Forrest calls, “isolated hints that other traditions [of morris] may have existed.”⁵²² From the May games, sources on morris dancing extend throughout several locations in southern England, including London, Gloucester, Plymouth, and Leicester.

Forrest then takes time to lay out the role of churches in spreading the morris dance throughout southern England. From 1540-1570, churches used morris dancing as an entertainment and attraction to bring audiences for purchasing ale and raising money.⁵²³ After 1570, with the rise of Puritanism, churches turned to explicitly prohibiting morris dancing, and lambasting the practice. During the time of church sponsorship, morris dances often featured storylines with Maid Marian, Robin Hood, and Friar Tuck.⁵²⁴ Forrest connects these to the tournament transformation into entertainment, in that,

the centerpiece of all early Robin Hood ballads and plays was a challenge to a classic duel, seemingly placing the narratives within the knightly tournamenting tradition ... But ... the outward tourney form was simply the instrument for farce.⁵²⁵

Once again, Forrest relates the morris to the development of chivalric narratives surrounding tournament competitions. Since Forrest consistently relates tournament competitions and narratives to the morris, he also notes elaborately staged battles at the Tudor court. At the marriage of each of Henry VII’s children, Arthur, Mary, and Margaret, combat spectacles were part of the festivities.⁵²⁶ But, as the sixteenth century continued, in England and Italy, “basic forms of medieval combat have

⁵²² Forrest, *The History of Morris Dancing*, 125.

⁵²³ Forrest, *The History of Morris Dancing*, 140-146.

⁵²⁴ Forrest, *The History of Morris Dancing*, 147.

⁵²⁵ Forrest, *The History of Morris Dancing*, 151.

⁵²⁶ Forrest, *The History of Morris Dancing*, 67-69.

gradually become surrounded by dramatic trappings until the aesthetic forms have completely usurped the martial.”⁵²⁷ More specifically, the European processional morris or moresca stripped the battle and left the dancing, while court morrises or moresche emphasized narrative in the dance, over and above the combat.⁵²⁸

Even taking sixteenth-century church sponsorship into account, sources on morris dancing are confined to southern England. Forrest, then, maps imagined dancing bodies in specific performance venues: the Tudor court, city parades or processions, and local parish fundraisers for ales. From isolated sources in northern Britain, he indicates morris dancing may have had a wider circulation or encompassed further variations, but as yet, sources do not reflect additional trends. Based on the sources within England, Forrest finds the morris moved from noble and aristocratic circulation, into urban society and rural parishes, by way of public processions and church sponsorships. Overall, Forrest lays out two trajectories for the English morris after the sixteenth century: noble sponsorship in masques and anti-masques, and royal visits and celebrations; and public morris dancing in urban and rural festivals. By the end of the sixteenth century, some English playwrights included morris dancing in the staged action onstage, but this trend “had a vogue of only about thirty-five years, from 1589 to 1623 (with several gaps).”⁵²⁹

If we visualize Forrest’s work on a map, in the fifteenth century, we would see isolated instances of both morris and staged mock combat in the Tudor court. These morris dances continue throughout, occurring in marriage ceremonies, royal visits, and eventually masques and anti-masques. Then, around 1520, we would see morris dancing in Midsummer and Midwinter festivities in London, and then a gradual spread of morris to other southern and urban locations in England.

⁵²⁷ Forrest, *The History of Morris Dancing*, 90.

⁵²⁸ Forrest, *The History of Morris Dancing*, 99.

⁵²⁹ Forrest, *The History of Morris Dancing*, 215-219.

By 1540, the Midsummer Watch is defunct in London, and morris dancing ends in sources related to this festival. Around 1540, we would see morris dancing in local church venues in southern England, for about thirty years. After 1570, and the escalation of anti-morris sentiment in Protestant churches, we would see morris dancing end in those venues. Towards the end of the sixteenth century, we would see morris dancing occur in isolated occurrences in assembly halls and rural locations. Meanwhile, on the continent, we hear of a few moresche in Italy, one in Rome, 1473; one in Urbino, 1513; and one in Rome, 1521.

If we only read Forrest's scholarship, our imaginary map of morris circulation begins and ends with England and the Tudor court. If Forrest were the only published and accepted scholar on the morris as a pan-European practice, then we would originate our questions with how the morris circulated out of England and the Tudor court to other locations. Dancing bodies moving into and out of the Tudor court would be qualified as credible carriers and transmitters of danced knowledge to all other locations. Forrest's map enables us to consider England as a primary location of danced knowledge within Europe, and allows us to question how European courts exchanged dance practices in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries.

Now, I'll move to the final location of moresca and danced combat: Italy, or the regions which would eventually comprise Italy. The globe spins down and to the east, just south of the Alps and into the Mediterranean. The first sources for moresca come in 1455, from a marriage in April and a betrothal in October. In April, Tristano Sforza married Beatrice d'Este. The Sforza house ruled Milan, and the d'Este family ruled Ferrara, both northern regions of what would become Italy. Their wedding occurred in either Ferrara or Milan.⁵³⁰ In October, Ippolita Sforza was betrothed to

⁵³⁰ A. William Smith, ed., *Fifteenth-Century Dance and Music: Twelve Transcribed Italian Treatises, and Collection in the Tradition of Domenico da Piacenza, Volume 1: Treatises and Music* (Hillsdale, New York: Pendragon Press, 1995) 6.

Alfonso d'Aragona of Naples, also known as the Duke of Calabria. Their betrothal occurred in Naples. The dancing master in charge of planning and executing the dances at both festivities was Domenico da Piacenza, whose *De arte saltandi et choreas ducendi* is one of “the earliest choreographic records” from Europe.⁵³¹ Throughout the fifteenth century, and into the sixteenth, the *moresca* appears most often within the records of the noble families in Italian regions. McGinnis notes “Alessandro Pontremoli and Patrizia La Rocca suggest that the use of *moresca* at wedding celebrations was a tradition bordering on ritual.”⁵³² Three families dominate these sources: House of d'Este from northern Italian territories, House of Aragona from southern Italian territories (and Aragón-Catalunya in what would become northeastern Spain), and House of Sforza from northern Italian territories. Cities with *moresche* performances included, Pesaro, Pavia, Urbino, Milan, Siena, Naples, and Rome.⁵³³

In the House of d'Este, Ercole ruled as the Duke of Ferrara from 1471 until 1505. He “fostered the development of secular, vernacular theatre (in particular the translated comedies of Plautus),” which, in turn, “encouraged the production of complicated and imaginative *moresche*,” usually performed as intermezzo in between comedies.⁵³⁴ In 1491, Ercole and his second wife, Leonora d'Aragona, welcomed their son Alfonso and his new bride, Anna Sforza with lavish ceremonies, such as the “formal and classicized entry ..., the nuptial mass, a huge banquet,” and “three comedies by Plautus ... performed with three *intermedii*.”⁵³⁵ The first and third intermezzo

⁵³¹ Nevile, *Eloquent Body*, 6.

⁵³² McGinnis, “Moving in High Circles,” 172.

⁵³³ McGinnis, “Moving in High Circles,” 153-154, 172, 174, 178-179, 188-189, 190-191, 193-194, 198.

⁵³⁴ McGinnis, “Moving in High Circles,” 178.

⁵³⁵ McGinnis, “Moving in High Circles,” 188. Ludovico Ariosto, a Renaissance playwright under Ercole d'Este's patronage may have performed in these festivities, see Edmund Garrett Gardner *The King of Court Poets: A Study*

were moresche; performers in the first moresca wielded torches instead of swords, while performers in the third moresca wielded golden “farm implements” during their dancing. These two moresche offered new themes, in contrast to previous trends of masculine combat and competition in moresche.

Following Pontremoli and La Rocca, McGinnis qualifies moresca as “a protean form that includes sword dancing, blackface, exotic costumes, virtuosic dancing, and both participatory and theatrical versions.”⁵³⁶ Further, much like other fifteenth-century dancing in Italy, the moresca continued in private performances in noble houses, as well as in court performance as spectacles. So, for instance, when Ercole d’Este welcomed Lucrezia Borgia, Alfonso’s second wife, in 1501, “two of his sons, including the groom, participated in a *moresca*.”⁵³⁷ The moresca emphasized their gymnastic and athletic leaps in festive combat. Kenley explains forms of moresca in greater detail, in that, “contorted gestures and high leaps, helped give a dance moresque character. Masks and bells worn on the legs were foremost among these characteristic accoutrements.”⁵³⁸ Italian dance sources note three variations on a moresca in noble contexts: “the solo moresca ..., mimed variants of the circle

of the Work, Life, and Times of Lodovico Ariosto (New York: E. P. Dutton and Company, 1906) 27; and Dennis Looney, “Ariosto and the Classics in Ferrara” in *Ariosto Today: Contemporary Perspectives*, eds. Donald Beecher, Massimo Ciavolella, Roberto Fedi, 18-31. (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2003) 25.

⁵³⁶ McGinnis, “Moving in High Circles,” 172.

⁵³⁷ McGinnis, “Moving in High Circles,” 174.

⁵³⁸ McDowell Eugene Kenley, “Sixteenth-Century Matachines Dances; Morescas of Mock Combat and Pantomime,” (PhD diss., Stanford University, 1983) 18-19.

dance in which the dancers often compete for a prize, ... and ... morescas in which two opposing lines of men engage in simulated sword play or mock combat.”⁵³⁹

As the fifteenth century continued, sources note moresche taught by associations of dancing masters in Siena, and occurring at Carnival in Urbino, Venice, Florence, and Siena.⁵⁴⁰ In 1493 Siena, three dancing masters agreed to teach the latest dance trends to their merchant-class clientele, such as the *gagliarda* (for 21 lire), *calata* (for 7 lire), *moresca* (for 21 lire), and many others.⁵⁴¹ In early sixteenth century Venice, Marino Sanuto mentions Francesco Cherea and Angelo Beolco Ruzante. Cherea appears in relation to “producing, perhaps directing theatrical events, plays, *moresche*, and *momarie*, with occasional forays into writing. His own performances, as reported, were limited to recitations.”⁵⁴² Ruzante “is a familiar name in theatre history as an actor and playwright whose works anticipated the *commedia dell’arte*.”⁵⁴³ Ruzante participated in dancing moresche for Venice’s Carnival in 1524, 1525, and 1526. McGinnis observes how the description of dancing, in a procession, appears similar to the 1491 *moresca* in d’Este’s court, because of the use of farm implements and costumes as peasants.⁵⁴⁴

⁵³⁹ Kenley, “Sixteenth-Century Matachines Dances; Morescas of Mock Combat and Pantomime,” 17; Ingrid Brainard, “An Exotic Court Dance and Spectacle of the Renaissance: La Moresca,” in *The International Musicological Society, 12th Congress, University of California, Berkeley* (1977): 720-724 (715-729).

⁵⁴⁰ McGinnis, “Moving in High Circles,” 187, 190, 210, 233, 235, 269, 320, 323, 331; Nevile, *Eloquent Body*, 22, 35.

⁵⁴¹ McGinnis, “Moving in High Circles,” 193, 210, 233-234.

⁵⁴² McGinnis, “Moving in High Circles,” 324, 320-323.

⁵⁴³ McGinnis, “Moving in High Circles,” 331; see also, Linda L. Carroll, “The Great Ruzante” in *The Routledge Companion to Commedia dell’Arte*, eds. Judith Chaffee and Oliver Crick, 213-220 (London: Routledge, 2014) 217.

⁵⁴⁴ McGinnis, “Moving in High Circles,” 331-333.

If we visualize McGinnis's work on a map, in the fifteenth century, we would see repeated instances of *moresca* dances in noble Italian houses and courts. *Moresche* would appear in relation to royal marriages and betrothals, as well as royal visits, and the rise of secular, vernacular theatre in Renaissance Italy. Near the latter end of the fifteenth century, we would see *moresche* being taught in dancing schools in Siena and Florence, as well as occurring in processions and comedies at Carnival in several locations, such as Venice, Urbino, Pesaro, Ferrara, Milan, Mantua, and Florence. Italian-focused scholarship enables us to query the importance of *moresche* narratives through danced movement and their connection to the rise of vernacular theatre in Italy.

If we only read Italian-focused scholarship on the *moresca*, our imaginary map of circulation begins and ends with Italian courts. We would originate our questions with how the *moresca* circulated out of Italy into other European locations, and most likely, how the *moresca* related to the development of ballet in Italy, which Catherine de'Medici took to France. Dancing bodies moving into and out of Italian noble courts would be qualified as credible carriers and transmitters of danced knowledge to all other locations. In addition, dancing bodies moving into and out of Italian dancing schools and Carnival celebrations, would also be qualified as credible carriers and transmitters of danced knowledge to other locations. Italian-focused scholarship further enables us to ask about the influence of a rising merchant class on acquiring and transmitting embodied knowledge through danced repertoires, all while traveling the globe for European investment and settlement.

After rehearsing all of this scholarship in relation to each other, I can now synthesize an overall pan-European map of *moresca*-*morris* circulation. The first European-language archival sources specifically using the words *morris* or *moresca* appear in the 1450s in Italy and England. Earlier (thirteenth to early fifteenth-century) Spanish-language archives on *moros y cristianos* mention dancing. But, it remains unclear if the festive combat dances or celebrations were called *moresca* at the time of writing, or how their music or movements related to later *moresche* and

morris dances. This is not to say the moresca did not originate within Spain, or potentially arise from cultural exchanges between noble Iberian houses and Moorish rule. Only that, at this point, without further archival exploration, it is uncertain if dances like *what became known as* the moresca appeared prior to the mid-fifteenth century within Iberian territories. Given Dwight Reynolds's research into musical exchanges between Muslim and Christian courts in medieval Iberia, as well as his findings on Andalusian musicians in the same courts where Harris also locates early *moros y cristianos*, this question bears further research.⁵⁴⁵

Indeed, in the next paragraph, as I map out mentions of the moresca, it does not take much further research to discover connections to Iberian noble houses among most of the European courts in which a morris or moresca is mentioned. But, it also does not take much further research to discover connections to Italian, English, Burgundian, Habsburgian, French, Flemish, or Scottish noble houses and courts throughout Europe, either. All of this is to say, it remains unclear if the morris and moresca arose in Italy and England from a common source, namely a Spanish origin. But after both the morris and moresca appear in European-language sources, the noble and royal courts in question perform for each other often enough, that a broadly construed, pan-European circulation manifests without (as of yet) a known original event or exchange.

Mentions of morris or moresche occur in major European courts in the late fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries, including but not limited to: the court of James IV in Scotland; the Tudor court; the court of Charles the Bold in Bruges; the court of Maximilian I throughout central western Europe (parts of what is now Germany and Austria); the House of Sforza in Milan, Italy; the House of Aragona in Naples; and the House of d'Este in Ferrara. In the same time span, mentions of

⁵⁴⁵ Dwight F. Reynolds, "Music in Medieval Iberia: Contact, Influence, and Hybridization," in *Medieval Encounters* 15 (2009): 243 (236-255).

morris or moresca also occur in festival processions in cities across Europe, including but not limited to: Midwinter, Midsummer, and Shrovetide in England and Scotland; Corpus Christi in Aragón-Catalunya; and Carnival in several northern Italian cities. From synthesizing this map, danced knowledge of the moresca or morris travels outwards from Europe to other locations.

In other words, imagined dancing bodies moving into and out of major European noble houses and seasonal festivals can carry and transmit knowledge of the moresca or morris to locations outside of Europe. Harris's work shows this, when he explores performances with mock combat dancing from indigenous Mesoamerican and Spanish practices. Italian-focused scholarship also implies this, because of the rising merchant influence in places like Florence, Siena, and Venice. Imagined dancing bodies from European territories show *what happened* and function as a philosophy of *that which is said to have happened*. That is, notice how in all of these narratives, even in the ones gesturing towards or deliberately examining trans-oceanic exchanges, embodied knowledge travels primarily with imagined dancing bodies with European heritages. Because the historical worlds of the morris and moresca deploy imagined dancing bodies from western and central European locations as the principal figures to follow over space and time.

This historiographic map, although preceding the codification of an imagined Europeanist dancing body, concurs with and amplifies “the moment of fact creation” at the source level of *what happened* and *that which is said to have happened* in narratives legitimated as dance history. In order to appear in a historical narrative of dance history, a performer must appear as an imagined dancing body with European heritages and within European courts, festivals, and occasionally, church-sponsored events. Dance history, even in the moresca and morris, follows the presence of imagined dancing bodies with European heritages, which generates an absence of imagined dancing bodies with non-European heritages. In this time period, the latter category of imagined dancing bodies could evoke Jewish, Romani, Muslim, sub-Saharan, North African, and even newly converted

Christian heritages from converso or morisco communities. While I am focusing on *belonging while Black* in relation to sub-Saharan performers and influences, sub-Saharans are not the only continental, religious, or racial community excluded in these sources. In the next chapter, I'll analyze Early Modern European travel writing, and assess the lengthy process of silencing and displacing imagined dancing Black bodies with sub-Saharan heritages.

– 3 – DANCING WHILE BLACK:
GROUNDED THROUGH SAVAGE SILENCE

*Everyone knows what Columbus did in 1492, but not everyone remembers what he did in 1493.
He wrote an account of his voyage and made it available for publication... The written voyages
were scarcely less important in the transformation of Europe and the rest of the world than were
the actual ones.*⁵⁴⁶

In the above quote, Richard Helgerson connects European sailing ventures to printed and published knowledge of these ventures, made available and preserved in libraries across Europe. Both the actual voyages—the sailing and the military conquests, the trading for and looting of natural resources, the indentured and enslaved systems of labor—and the written publication of *what happened* on these voyages, transformed Europe as a continent in relation to the rest of the world. Helgerson further writes, since 1492, “Europe has undergone a constant, if uneven, process of practical and ideological adaptation to the new conditions discovered or created by its expansionist activities.”⁵⁴⁷ He elaborates, “In these books, Europe first saw the other, but here it also first saw itself interacting with that other and thus first saw itself *as* an other.”⁵⁴⁸ Published accounts of

⁵⁴⁶ Richard Helgerson, “Camões, Hakluyt, and the Voyages of Two Nations,” in *Colonialism and Culture*, ed., Nicholas B. Dirks, 27-63 (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1992) 27.

⁵⁴⁷ Helgerson, “Camões, Hakluyt, and the Voyages of Two Nations,” in *Colonialism and Culture*, 27.

⁵⁴⁸ Helgerson, “Camões, Hakluyt, and the Voyages of Two Nations,” in *Colonialism and Culture*, 27.

European voyages contributed to and influenced the formation of a continental European sense of belonging in relation, and often in contrast, to the rest of the known world.⁵⁴⁹

When European travelers wrote and published about their travels along the coasts of Africa, they often included information about dancing. To borrow from and adapt Helgerson, the dances written about and recorded in sub-Saharan locations were just as important in the formation of European dance decorum as those written down and recorded in European courts. And just as the legitimated, court ballet ideal of an imagined Europeanist dancing body took time to formulate in written sources, so too did the negated and disarticulated imagined Black dancing body take time to emerge within travel writing and historical narratives. Disarticulation violently silences the enactment of knowledge in the moment of performance, and attacks moments wherein “dancing bodies articulate forms of knowledge and practice.”⁵⁵⁰ To disarticulate, or negate, dancing bodies means to take apart and disassemble either the body or the embodied knowledges capable of being transmitted or developed. Meaning that when a European writer disarticulates an imagined Black dancing body, they *literally* distance or remove, silence or negate, an embodied act from the humanity of the body in motion.

By identifying disarticulation in the process of forming, or writing, imagined Black dancing bodies, I am also tracking the imaginative power to *disqualify* embodied knowledge from sub-Saharan persons and sub-Saharan territorial homes. Recall that analyzing historical narratives within the “fundamentally processual character of historical production” can also tell us *how* those events and

⁵⁴⁹ See for example, Sandra Young, “Early Modern Geography and Construction of a Knowable Africa,” in *Atlantic Studies* 12:4 (2015): 412-434, for how John Pory defined travel writing in relation to understanding Europe as “home” and being able to find “home.”

⁵⁵⁰ Susan Manning and Lucia Ruprecht, eds., *New German Dance Studies* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2012) 11.

people, times and places, became significant enough to be legitimated and mentioned knowledge about the past.⁵⁵¹ While the previous chapter explored how imagined dancing bodies from within European borders became significant enough as the ideal human and as legitimated embodied knowledge for the written record, this chapter investigates how imagined dancing bodies from within sub-Saharan regions became insignificant and illegitimate, negated and displaced, from enacting embodied and human knowledge worthy of the written record.

Put differently, to disarticulate the imagined Black dancing body as a source of embodied and human knowledge implies that the writer generated, or created, an epistemological break between the body as human and the knowledge it can carry and transmit to the future. Black indexes the violence of writers who imagined bodies descended from and within sub-Saharan regions as incapable of moving in ways qualified as *human* dancing, and unworthy of being recorded as sources for future dance performances. So, for instance, Willem Bosman is able to deride the “nobility” of Africans along the Gold Coast near Axim, even as he describes their dancing as both leaping and military exercises. Through tactics of derision, Bosman disarticulates and disassembles the capacity of Gold Coast Africans to carry noble and embodied knowledges worthy of recording and preserving in writing. He negates the nobility of Gold Coast Africans so as to displace and silence philosophical kinships between their dancing as a source of knowledge about a performance event and as a source of knowledge about their people group’s history in the Gold Coast region. Black thus indexes the process of negating humanity as a strategy of violence.

When travel writers deploy this violence within “the making of sources,” where written documents point to “the moment of fact creation,” they fashion, or compose, Black savagery as the

⁵⁵¹ Trouillot, *Silencing the Past*, 28.

legitimated and *factual* counterpoint to decorous European humanity.⁵⁵² Thus, while in the previous chapter, I demonstrated how written sources on European dancing wrestled with the philosophical, regional, and then continental implications of decorous governance reflected and forged on the dance floor. In this chapter, I explore how widely-circulated, European-language, written sources on dancing in West Africa reveal the disarticulation of embodied knowledges carried in and through imagined Black dancing bodies. I trace the varying and shifting versions of written sources about West African dancing, to reveal the acceleration of disarticulation and negation of imagined Black dancing bodies over the course of the seventeenth century. That is, by identifying the prevalence of leaping in European travel writing, I assess the process of silencing imagined Black dancing bodies from serving as embodied sources of that which is said to have happened. By the beginning of the eighteenth century, we will see how West Africans pass entirely into an imaginary domain of Black bodies forged by European spectators. This imaginary, metaphysical domain, where African bodies do not *live* as human, involves the European writers and readers who came before, the European writers and readers in the early eighteenth-century present, and the European readers yet to come. We see, in other words, the historiographic process whereby Europeans develop and then claim the imaginative power to forge imagined Black bodies as always already conquered non-humans. We see how grounding imagined Black dancing bodies converges with the disqualification of imagined Black dancing bodies from serving as embodied sources of knowledge.

⁵⁵² Trouillot, *Silencing the Past*, 26.

LEAPING WHILE BLACK

*These Canarians also are lightly built, great runners and jumpers, for they are accustomed to the crags of this most mountainous island. They leap from rock to rock, barefooted, like goats, and clear jumps of incredible width.*⁵⁵³

From southern Europe, the Low Countries and German states to England, editors across Europe collected written sources from companies' records and courts' chronicles, as well as from personal contacts with professors, merchants, and aristocracy.⁵⁵⁴ Prominent editors in this time period included Giovanni Battista Ramusio in sixteenth-century Venice; Richard Hakluyt and Samuel Purchas in late sixteenth- and early seventeenth-century England; André Thévet and Pierre Bergeron in sixteenth- and seventeenth-century France, respectively; and Theodor de Bry and Levinus Hulsius in the seventeenth-century German states.⁵⁵⁵ They borrowed and translated, while summarizing and

⁵⁵³ Alvise da Ca' da Mosto, "The Voyages of Cadamosto," in *The Voyages of Cadamosto: And Other Documents on Western Africa in the Second Half of the Fifteenth Century*, transl and ed GR Crone, 1-84. (London: Hakluyt Society, 1937) 14.

⁵⁵⁴ Venice was the center of print production and distribution in the fifteenth and sixteenth century Europe. In the seventeenth century, this shifted to Amsterdam after the Spanish took Antwerp. See Peter Burke, "Early Modern Venice as a Center of Information and Communication," in *Venice Reconsidered: The history and Civilization of an Italian City-State, 1297-1797*, eds., John Jeffries Martin and Dennis Romano, 389-419 (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2002), 403-405; Joan-Pau Rubiés, "From the 'History of Travayle' to the History of Travel Collections," in *Richard Hakluyt and Travel Writing in Early Modern Europe*, eds., Clarie Jowitt and Daniel Carey, 25- (Surrey: Ashgate Publishing Limited, 2012) 28-29, 33-34, 35-38, 39-41.

⁵⁵⁵ Daniel Carey and Claire Jowitt, "Introduction," in *Richard Hakluyt and Travel Writing in Early Modern Europe*, (1-10) 5; Margaret Small, "A World Seen Through Another's Eyes: Hakluyt, Ramusio, and the Narratives of the *Navigazioni et Viaggi*," in *Richard Hakluyt and Travel Writing in Early Modern Europe* (45-55) 45-46; Sven Trakulhun, "Three

revising, truncating and enlarging, where they saw fit. Most editors, in the humanist practice of historiography, also included allusions to Roman or biblical precedents. Throughout Europe, by copying and adapting from each other, travelers and their editors expanded and fortified an interrelated network of silences around imagined Black dancing bodies in sub-Saharan regions. Yet, up until the eighteenth century, European travel writers and editors wrote of asymmetrical and angular imagined Black bodies as the exception rather than the rule.

Leaping appeared, for instance, when European writers assessed West African ability to defend against European combat tactics. The fifteenth-century Venetian trader, Alvise da Ca' da Mosto (Cadamosto) wrote of Canary Islanders leaping with bare feet, and like goats, able to “clear jumps of incredible width.”⁵⁵⁶ In Cadamosto's writing, the imagined Black dancing bodies of Canary Islanders move throughout the jagged and rocky terrain with ease. They also have extraordinary strength, which can overpower European defensive measures. In other words, Cadamosto composes the imagined Black bodies of Canary Islanders as swift, evasive, and not easily overpowered. Cadamosto's voyages received publication in a variety of locations, including a first edition in Fracanzano da Montalboddo's compilation of travel writing in *Paesi novamenta ritrovati* (1507, Vicenza) and another printing in Giovanni Battista Ramusio's first volume of *Delle navigationi et viaggi* (1550, Venice). The first English-language edition did not appear until Thomas Astley's compilations in 1745 and 1757. Editors circulated Cadamosto's knowledge, and as we will see, later travel writers often reviewed previous versions prior to finishing their own versions.

Tales of the New World: Nation, Religion, and Colonialism in Hakluyt, de Bry, and Hulsius,” in *Richard Hakluyt and Travel Writing in Early Modern Europe* (57-66) 57.

⁵⁵⁶ Ca' da Mosto, “The Voyages of Cadamosto,” in *The Voyages of Cadamosto*, 14. Cadamosto's first journey, which took place in 1555, Cadamosto sailed to Porto Santo and Madeira, the Canary Islands, and eventually to the mouth of the River Gambia. See Crone, GR, transl and ed., “Introduction” in *The Voyages of Cadamosto*, (xi-xlii) xxi-xxiv.

Giovanni Battista Ramusio, as “the great Venetian travel editor,” focused on curating new knowledge of geography. In his seminal three-volume work, *Delle Navigationi et Viaggi*, Ramusio “organized his work according to different zones of exploration and paths of traffic, trade, and commerce.”⁵⁵⁷ For the volume focused on Africa, he included a description of Gabon by Hanno from the 6th century BCE, maps by Giacomo Gastaldi, Johannis de’Medici’s/Giovanni Leone’s description of northern and Saharan African regions, excerpts of João de Barros’s descriptions of West Africa, and others.⁵⁵⁸ Ramusio framed his curatorial work in conversation with Ptolemy and Pliny, while also aspiring to “design a new cartography of the globe, with a focus on Africa and India in the first volume,” thereby bringing contemporary accounts to bear on ancient knowledge.⁵⁵⁹ He composed a historical narrative of geography and European conquest within humanist parameters. Ramusio’s work set a precedent and influenced later travel editors throughout Europe. He sent documents to Hakluyt, for example, while others translated the sources published by Ramusio, which facilitated a wide-ranging circulation of navigations and voyages.⁵⁶⁰

European travel writing circulated extensively among writers, publishers, librarians, and scholars, and into both mercantile and political circles. Piechocki observes, “Ramusio ... is linked to Venice’s most prominent humanists such as Pietro Bembo, Andrea Navagero, Girolama Fracastoro, and Giacomo Gastaldi, all engaged in questions of the Italian vernacular, translation, New World

⁵⁵⁷ Katharina N. Piechocki, “Cartographic Humanism: Defining Early Modern Europe, 1400-1550,” (PhD diss., New York University, 2013) 74.

⁵⁵⁸ Margaret Small, “A World Seen Through Another’s Eyes: Hakluyt, Ramusio, and the Narratives of *Navigationi et Viaggi*,” in *Richard Hakluyt and Travel Writing in Early Modern Europe* (45-55) 48.

⁵⁵⁹ Piechocki, “Cartographic Humanism,” 146.

⁵⁶⁰ Joan-Pau Rubiés, “From the ‘History of Travayle’ to the History of Travel Collections,” in *Richard Hakluyt and Travel Writing in Early Modern Europe*, (25-41) 27.

discoveries, and cartography.”⁵⁶¹ Ramusio worked in Venice, “a center of information and communication” through its “network of merchants, diplomats, spies, and other agents ... from Europe through the Ottoman Empire all the way to India, Ceylon, and Burma.”⁵⁶² He served political and governmental bodies, such as the Senate and Council of Ten. Throughout his career in public service, Ramusio corresponded regularly with Pietro Bembo, who became known for writing his poems and prose in medieval Tuscan, and thus a significant linguistic influence on the development of an Italian vernacular. Given the size of Ramusio’s work, it appears most likely only merchants, aristocracy, and scholars had the capacity to purchase and collect his volumes. The first volume, on Africa, received the most editions, and went through five printings between 1550 and 1613.⁵⁶³ But the knowledge curated by Ramusio set the precedent for later compilations, such as those by Hakluyt and Purchas, both of which would influence and engage with the work of English poets and playwrights on a broader scale.

In the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, travel writers and editors demonstrate how the “fundamentally processual character of historical production” consists of “processes that feed on each other.”⁵⁶⁴ In Trouillot’s terms, these travel editors moved back and forth between the first three steps of the historical process, that is, the creation of sources, archives, and narratives. When Ramusio gathered João de Barros and Giovanni Leone into one volume focused on Africa, he

⁵⁶¹ Piechocki, “Cartographic Humanism,” 82, 92-93. Fracastoro would become widely known as a scientific scholar in medicine, mathematics, geography, and astronomy, as well as being a poet. Navagero would serve as a historian of the Venetian Republic.

⁵⁶² Peter Burke, “Early Modern Venice as a Center of Information and Communication,” in *Venice Reconsidered* (389-419) 389.

⁵⁶³ Piechocki “Cartographic Humanism,” 87; Burke, “Early Modern Venice,” in *Venice Reconsidered*, 403-405.

⁵⁶⁴ Trouillot, *Silencing the Past*, 28 and 26.

identified and categorized them as reliable sources on which to expand a base of geographical knowledge. By collecting them into a volume of navigations and travels, he also generated an archival kinship. He made them available, in print, for future writers, readers, and researchers to draw upon and use, *without* having to directly contact de Barros or Leone, and *without* having to travel to the academic, religious, or governing institutional repositories holding sources like de Barros and Leone.

By framing de Barros and Leone in conversation with Ptolemy's and Pliny's geography, Ramusio also made explicit a humanist narrative of modern geography drawing on and improving ancient antecedents.⁵⁶⁵ Ramusio located sources, and curated them as a collection, creating an archivable narrative of legitimated, humanist and modern, knowledge about the continent of Africa in relation to Europe.⁵⁶⁶ His work influenced later writers and editors, as well. After Ramusio's version of *Descrittione dell'Africa*, several more versions appeared throughout the continent in various languages, including Latin, French, English, and Dutch.⁵⁶⁷ "Geographers used it to renew their descriptions of a continent still basically unknown to Europeans."⁵⁶⁸ The "historical accounts and descriptions" from *Descrittione/Description* were "quoted by a large number of historians and

⁵⁶⁵ See again, for Leonardo Bruni's fifteenth-century shift in historiographic practice, Ernst Breisach, *Historiography: Ancient, Medieval, and Modern* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2007) 154-155. For Ramusio's connections to humanist scholars in Italy, see Jerome Randall Barnes, "Giovanni Battista Ramusio and the History of Discoveries: An Analysis of Ramusio's Commentary, Cartography, and Imagery in Delle Navigazioni et Viaggi," (PhD diss., University of Texas at Arlington, 2007) 18, 21, 24.

⁵⁶⁶ See also, Piechocki, "Cartographic Humanism," 140-143.

⁵⁶⁷ Crofton Black, "Leo Africanus's *Descrittione dell'Africa* and Its Sixteenth-Century Translations," in *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* 65 (2002): (262-272) 265, 267.

⁵⁶⁸ Zhiri, "Leo Africanus and the Limits of Translation," in *Travel and Translation in the Early Modern Period*, ed., Carmine G. Di Biase, 175-186 (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2006) 176.

geographers,” as well as other philosophers and writers.⁵⁶⁹ Moreover, “the African toponyms it revealed to Europe were still used in maps drawn in the second half of the nineteenth century.”^{570, 571}

Ramusio’s work included making significant editorial revisions in sources written by travelers. As Oumelbanine Zhiri observes, “Among the texts of [*Delle Navigationi et Viaggi*], Leo Africanus’s was arguably the one that attracted the most attention.”⁵⁷² In his published notes, Ramusio insisted upon “the exceptional quality” of Giovanni Leone’s writing, so much so “that all other sources [would] seem worthless.”⁵⁷³ Further, Ramusio asserted, “We have been given information about [Africa] by no other author, or at any rate, not in such abundance or with such authority.”⁵⁷⁴ Ramusio could make this claim based on Giovanni Leone’s extensive travels throughout the Mediterranean. Giovanni Leone/John Leo was born in Granada, the final stronghold of Moorish Al-Andalus in the Iberian Peninsula, as al-Hasan ibn Muhammad al-Wezzan. His family fled to Fez after Spain’s victory over Granada. He traveled throughout the Mediterranean, North Africa, and Saharan Africa in the service of the Sultan in Fez, before being

⁵⁶⁹ Zhiri, “Leo Africanus and the Limits of Translation,” in *Travel and Translation in the Early Modern Period*, 176. Zhiri lists “Montaigne’s *Essais*, Jean Bodin’s *Methodus and Facilem Historiarum Cognitionem* and *Sex Livres de la Republique*, Robert Burton’s *Anatomy of Melancholy*, Gibbon’s *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, among many others.”

⁵⁷⁰ Zhiri, “Leo Africanus and the Limits of Translation,” in *Travel and Translation in the Early Modern Period*, 176.

⁵⁷¹ Cf Zhiri, “Leo Africanus’s *Description of Africa*,” in *Travel Knowledge: European “Discoveries” in the Early Modern Period*, eds., Ivo Kamps and Jyotsana Singh 258-265 (New York: Palgrave, 2001).

⁵⁷² Zhiri, “Leo Africanus and the Limits of Translation,” in *Travel and Translation in the Early Modern Period*, 176

⁵⁷³ Zhiri, “Leo Africanus and the Limits of Translation,” in *Travel and Translation in the Early Modern Period*, 177

⁵⁷⁴ Quotd and transltd in Crofton Black, “Leo Africanus’s *Descrittione dell’Africa* and Its Sixteenth-Century Translations,” 264 (262-272).

captured and sold to Pope Leo X in Rome.⁵⁷⁵ Upon his conversion to Christianity, al-Hasan is recorded under the name *Johannis Leo de' Medicis*, and Ramusio added *Africanus* in his version of *Descrittione*.⁵⁷⁶

In addition to adapting the name of *Johannis Leo/Giovanni Leone* with *Africanus*, Ramusio also revised and altered the Italian of *Descrittione dell'Africa* significantly. He chose “to edit [*Della Descrittione dell'Africa*] and correct the innumerable grammar and spelling mistakes” in the Italian.⁵⁷⁷ Additionally, Ramusio “did not hesitate to intervene heavily in the text, cutting off passages or even adding interpolations.”⁵⁷⁸ His editorial work, in summarizing and enlarging and revising, was well in line with the expectations of sixteenth-century editors. In this time period, editors not only curated knowledge, they shaped and formed it. They made editorial choices about which written sources to include and also about what parts or sections of those written sources to include or revise. They did so *without* necessarily calling explicit attention to editorial deletions and insertions, thereby influencing contemporary readerships and framing their printed collections for future uses.⁵⁷⁹

⁵⁷⁵ Bernadette Andrea, “Assimilation or Dissimulation? Leo Africanus’s “Geographical Historie of Africa” and the Parable of Amphibia,” in *ARIEL: A Review of International English Literature* 32:3 (July 2001): 7-9 (7-29); Black, “Leo Africanus’s *Descrittione dell'Africa* and Its Sixteenth-Century Translations,” 262-263.

⁵⁷⁶ Andrea, “Assimilation or Dissimulation? Leo Africanus’s “Geographical Historie of Africa” and the Parable of Amphibia,” 8 (7-29).

⁵⁷⁷ Zhiri, “Leo Africanus and the Limits of Translation,” in *Travel and Translation in the Early Modern Period*, 179.

⁵⁷⁸ See Black, “Leo Africanus’s *Descrittione dell'Africa* and Its Sixteenth-Century Translations,” 267-271, for specifics on how European translators and editors revised Giovanni Leone/John Leo on Islam. See also Zhiri, “Leo Africanus and the Limits of Translation,” in *Travel and Translation in the Early Modern Period*, 179.

⁵⁷⁹ Margaret Small, “A World Seen Through Another’s Eyes: Hakluyt, Ramusio, and the Narratives of the *Navigazioni et Viaggi*,” in *Richard Hakluyt and Travel Writing in Early Modern Europe* (45-55)

Editors in this time period demonstrate Trouillot's process of historical production, wherein "mentions and silences are thus active, dialectical counterparts of which history is the synthesis."⁵⁸⁰ Crofton Black shows, specifically, how anti-Muslim sentiment increased with each subsequent translation and adaptation of the *Descrittione/Description*. For example, "where [the original Italian] manuscript merely says that the Africans 'became Muslim on account of some preachers'," Ramusio instead writes, "'They drew the minds of Africans to their law by means of persuasion'."⁵⁸¹ In later versions, such as the 1600 version by John Pory, Muslim persuasion became written as, "Mahomets disciples so bewitched [Africans] ... that they allured their weake minds to consent."⁵⁸² Not only does Pory move Muslims further from preaching and closer to bewitching, or deceiving, he also implicates Africans as weak-minded and susceptible to superstition and trickery.

Thus, even though Giovanni Leone/John Leo, acquired his *exceptional authority* on the African continent through Islamic networks, and even though he wrote his converted name with Latin characters in the Arabic version, Yuhanna al-Asad,⁵⁸³ Ramusio and later editors emphasized and made present Giovanni Leone/John Leo as an exceptional Christian authority on the African continent. The changing versions of Johannis Leo-Giovanni Leone-John Leo towards a presence of Christianity simultaneously silenced his Islamic familial and political connections. Put differently, to make Yuhanna al-Asad present as a legitimated source, for Europeans and about the African continent, Ramusio and subsequent editors synthesized his presence as Johannis Leo/Giovanni

⁵⁸⁰ Trouillot, *Silencing the Past*, 48.

⁵⁸¹ Black, "Leo Africanus's *Descrittione dell'Africa* and Its Sixteenth-Century Translations," 268.

⁵⁸² Qotd in Black, "Leo Africanus's *Descrittione dell'Africa* and Its Sixteenth-Century Translations," 269.

⁵⁸³ Natalie Zemon Davis, *Trickster Travels: A Sixteenth-Century Muslim Between Two Worlds* (New York: Hill and Wang, 2006) 65; Young, "Early Modern Geography and the Construction of a Knowable Africa," in *Atlantic Studies* 12:4 (2015): 418.

Leone/John Leo Africanus, the Christian convert who wrote in a European language. They also made absent the Andalusí, Islamic, Iberian, North African known as al-Hasan ibn Muhammad al-Wezzan and the Mediterranean intellectual who wrote himself as Yuhanna al-Asad.

To create, or forge, Giovanni Leone/John Leo as a source of knowledge, in writing, editors deployed and wielded “mentions and silences of various kinds and degrees,” including but not limited to, writing the Latin version of his converted name with Africanus at the end, and amending his descriptions of Islamic efforts at converting Africans. Johannis-Giovanni-John is one of the earliest, and arguably the most extensively influential, written source on world geography who entered the written record with qualified continental African and European heritages, as well as qualified Islamic and Christian heritages. Recent scholars, such as Oumelbanine Zhiri, Jonathan Burton, and Natalie Zemon Davis have made significant strides in reconfiguring John Leo Africanus as al-Hasan ibn Muhammad al-Wezzan and Yuhanna al-Asad within Islamic histories and writing practices, as well as within Christian Europe.⁵⁸⁴ But, until recently, Ramusio’s initial deployment of Johannis Leo/Giovanni Leone as a successful African convert to Christianity from Islam, defined the parameters through which the *Descrittione/Description* qualified as legitimate knowledge about Africa. In contrast, in relation to the writing of imagined Black dancing bodies, it takes nearly two hundred years for European editors and travelers to articulate the parameters of negation which continue to exert considerable influence on historical narratives of African Diasporic theatre and performance to the Americas. If John Leo Africanus is the initial continental African and Iberian source silenced into European belonging from the start, then the imagined Black dancing body is the

⁵⁸⁴ Jonathan Burton, “‘A Most Wily Bird’: Leo Africanus, *Othello* and the Trafficking in Difference,” in *Post-Colonial Shakespeares*, eds., Ania Loomba and Martin Orkin, 43-63 (London: Routledge, 1998); Davis, *Trickster Travels*; Zhiri, “Leo Africanus’s *Description of Africa*,” in *Travel Knowledge*, 258-265.

initial source on leaping and military exercises silenced into grounded belonging only with the acceleration of the trans-Atlantic trade and abolitionist campaigns.

Captain Towerson's Logs | Published by Richard Hakluyt

In England, even though very few could afford to own or collect Hakluyt's and Purchas's volumes, the printed sources and narratives widely influenced and contributed to how England encountered the rest of the world. The East India Company sent copies of Hakluyt's volumes to their factors, or company agents, at outlying posts. They did so, to comfort and encourage their factors with access to wide-ranging historical narratives.⁵⁸⁵ In England, early purchasers and collectors of Hakluyt's volumes included nobles and investors, advisors to the throne, and provosts of universities and elite boarding schools.⁵⁸⁶ Merchants and gentlemen with political and financial interests in England's overseas exploration were the primary readers, contributors, and collectors of Samuel Purchas's volumes. The East India Company also sent Samuel Purchas's publications to their company factors in outlying posts. Captain John Smith and Captain Luke Foxe drew on Purchas to publish their

⁵⁸⁵ David Harris Sacks, "Richard Hakluyt and His Publics, c. 1580–1620," in *Making Publics in Early Modern Europe: People, Things, Forms of Knowledge*, eds. Bronwen Wilson and Paul Yachnin, 159–176 (New York: Routledge, 2010) 164.

⁵⁸⁶ Joan-Pau Rubiés, "From the 'History of Travayle' to the History of Travel Collections," in *Richard Hakluyt and Travel Writing in Early Modern Europe*, 25–41; Sacks, "Richard Hakluyt and His Publics," in *Making Publics in Early Modern Europe*, 166, 168: Sacks discusses the interests of the following English readers: Sir Robert Cecil, John Selden, John Whitgift, Sir Edward Coke, Sir Walter Raleigh, Sir Henry Savile, Lord Lumley, George Wilmer Henry Percy, Ninth Earl of Northumberland, Sir Thomas Sherley, Sir William Berkeley, Henry Timberlake, Bishop Anthony Rudd, and many more.

respective histories of Virginia and the Northwest Passage.⁵⁸⁷ The sources collected by Purchas further influenced the literary and theatrical imaginations of John Dryden, Philip Massinger, John Milton, and potentially even William Shakespeare.⁵⁸⁸ As Anthony Parr, Virginia Mason Vaughan, and John Gillies show, the variety of English plays focusing on overseas expansion further reflects a widespread engagement with and desire for English “mastery of geographic space.”⁵⁸⁹ That is, even if direct links cannot be proved between specific sources printed and revised by Hakluyt and Purchas, the circulation of travel writing in their volumes, the repeated English attempts at trans-oceanic expansion, and theatrical performances of overseas travel all point to ongoing efforts to acquire, assemble, and interpret written sources in service of English expansion.

When Hakluyt set about assembling the written sources for *The Principal Navigations, Voyages, Traffiques and Discoveries of the English Nation* (1589; 1598-1600), he focused on curating an abundance of documents and added very little editorial commentary. Colm MacCrossan describes, “In total, *The Principal Navigations* contains almost 600 separate items representing a broad spectrum of travel

⁵⁸⁷ LE Pennington, “Samuel Purchas: His Reputation and the Uses of His Works,” In *The Purchas Handbook: Studies of the Life, Times and Writings of Samuel Purchas, 1577-1626*, edited by LE Pennington, Vol 1, 3-118 (London: The Hakluyt Society, 1997) 6.

⁵⁸⁸ Pennington, “Samuel Purchas: His Reputation and the Uses of His Works,” in *The Purchas Handbook*, 7-9.

⁵⁸⁹ Claire Jowitt, “Hakluyt’s Legacy: Armchair Travel in English Renaissance Drama,” in *Richard Hakluyt and Travel Writing in Early Modern Europe*, 295-306; Virginia Mason Vaughan, “Preface: The Mental Maps of English Renaissance Drama,” in *Playing the Globe: Genre and Geography in the English Renaissance*, eds. John Gillies and Virginia Mason Vaughan, 7-16 (Cranbury, New Jersey: Associated University Presses, Inc., 1998) 13. See also, John Gillies, “Introduction: Elizabethan Drama and the Cartographizations of Space,” in *Playing the Globe*, 19-45; Anthony Parr, “Introduction,” in *Three Renaissance Travel Plays*, ed. Anthony Parr, 1-54 (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1995).

genres.”⁵⁹⁰ Hakluyt, through his extensive contacts in merchant and aristocratic circles, as well as research in a wide range of record collections, assembled

reprints from sixteenth-century news pamphlets, transcriptions from private, commercial, and diplomatic correspondence, translated snippets from medieval Latin chronicles, longer translations from contemporary European histories, reproductions of ruttiers and ships’ logs, and extracts of poetry in Latin and English. In particular, his record of identifying and reproducing sometimes very brief mentions of early English voyaging attests to a methodical approach to trawling through archives such as chronicles and patent rolls.⁵⁹¹

In short, Hakluyt gathered written sources dealing directly with English global nautical exploration, including but not limited to, corporate governance, national politics, patents and petitions, and records of sailing operations. He arranged these sources in relation to contemporary new sources, and European and Latin histories and poetry. Hakluyt collected all of these sources, in order to, “rouse the English from their ‘sluggish security’ to emulate the achievements” of nations like France, Spain, and Portugal in carrying out global exploration and settlement.⁵⁹² In line with this goal, Hakluyt also advocated for exploration and settlement to Queen Elizabeth I directly, by writing “Discourse on Western Planting,” (1584),⁵⁹³ and he also “was associated with the Virginia Company as a patentee ... and as a shareholder, although his involvement was advisory at most.”⁵⁹⁴

⁵⁹⁰ Colm MacCrossan, “Framing ‘The English Nation’: Reading Between Text and Paratext in *The Principal Navigations*,” in *Richard Hakluyt and Travel Writing in Early Modern Europe*, 140.

⁵⁹¹ MacCrossan, “Framing ‘The English Nation,’” in *Richard Hakluyt and Travel Writing in Early Modern Europe*, 140.

⁵⁹² Claire Jowitt, “Hakluyt’s Legacy: Armchair Travel in English Renaissance Drama,” in *Richard Hakluyt and Travel Writing in Early Modern Europe*, 295.

⁵⁹³ Daniel Carey and Claire Jowitt, “Introduction,” in *Richard Hakluyt and Travel Writing in Early Modern Europe*, 8.

In the volumes of *The Principal Navigations*, published in 1589, Hakluyt published many logs of journeys to West Africa, including that of John Hawkins. From northern Europe, John Hawkins has the dubious honor of being labeled England's first slave trader under Queen Elizabeth I.⁵⁹⁵ In the late sixteenth century, he made several voyages to the Upper Guinea coast, between the Gambia region and what is now known as Liberia.⁵⁹⁶ Richard Hakluyt, about whom more will be shared below, published Hawkins's logs in his initial volumes of *Principal Navigations*. The log of the second journey is signed by "John Sparke, the Younger," who may have also been from Plymouth, Hawkins's hometown.⁵⁹⁷ In 1564, Sparke writes, Hawkins and his men stopped at the island archipelago of Bijagós. These islands lie off the coast of what is now Guinea-Bissau. Some of Hawkins's party stopped to see if they could succeed in capturing any Africans. They engaged the resident Africans in combat, and Sparke observes the Africans were unaware of the danger from firearms like the harquebus.

As the Africans fled, they "used a marveilous crying in their fight with leaping and turning their tayles, that it was most strange to see, and gave us great pleasure to beholde them."⁵⁹⁸ This one

⁵⁹⁴ Anthony Payne, "Hakluyt's London: Discovery and Overseas Trade," in *Richard Hakluyt and Travel Writing in Early Modern Europe*, 18.

⁵⁹⁵ Harry Kelsey, *Sir John Hawkins: Queen Elizabeth's Slave Trader* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2003) xiii-xiv.

⁵⁹⁶ Walter Rodney, *History of the Upper Guinea Coast, 1545-1800* (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1970) 40, 61, 124.

⁵⁹⁷ "The second voyage made by the R. W. sir John Hawkins knight .../The voyage made by M. John Hawkins Esquire and afterward knight ..." in *The Principal Navigations, Voyages, Traffiques and Discoveries of the English Nation in Twelve Volumes*, ed., Richard Hakluyt, Vol 10, 9-63 (New York: AMS Press, Inc., 1965) 63.

⁵⁹⁸ "The second voyage made by the R. W. sir John Hawkins knight .../The voyage made by M. John Hawkins Esquire and afterward knight ..." in *The Principal Navigations*, Vol 10, 16.

description composes the Africans as ignorant in European styles of warfare, yet capable of fleeing across more familiar terrain. The imagined Black bodies, as written and depicted for European readers, appear capable of turning and twisting in the air with great flexibility in evasive maneuvers. It remains unclear if the fleeing Africans turned and twisted because of being struck by ammunition and thus responding instinctually to the pain, or if they turned and twisted as well-rehearsed evasive maneuvers for arrow and sword combat. Regardless, this written source includes leaping and airborne flexibility for imagined Black bodies, and it deploys these imagined bodies as a source of pleasure for the assaulting Europeans. Having failed to capture any Africans, and needing a river pilot to continue their journeys into the African mainland, Hawkins and his men left the Bijagós islands. Like Cadamosto, Hawkins includes leaping in relation to agility over the African terrain and evasion of European combat offensives.

Hakluyt also published a log written by Captain William Towerson as the log of his first voyage to Guinea. In 1555, Towerson undertook the journey “with two good shippes, the one called the Hart, the other the Hinde, both of London, and the Masters of them were John Ralph and William Carter.”⁵⁹⁹ At the time, Towerson was one of the leading merchants in the newly-formed Muscovy Company, with goals of exploring Turkey and Russia.⁶⁰⁰ In his journal of the first voyage, Towerson notes they traveled southeast along the West African coast, from the River de Sestos

⁵⁹⁹ “The first voyage of Master William Towerson Marchant of London, to the coast of Guinea, with two Ships, in the yeere 1555,” in *The Principal Navigations*, ed., Richard Hakluyt, Vol 6, 177-211 (New York: AMS Press, Inc., 1965) 177.

⁶⁰⁰ In response to Muscovy Company representatives, Hakluyt gutted “Giles Fletcher’s account of an embassy to Russia entitled *Of the Russe Common Wealth* (1591).” See Carey and Jowitt, “Introduction,” in *Richard Hakluyt and Travel Writing in Early Modern Europe*, 6; Felicity Stout, “‘The Strange and Wonderful Discoverie of Russia’: Hakluyt and Censorship,” in *Richard Hakluyt and Travel Writing in Early Modern Europe*, 153-163.

(now River Cestos), and located another river. He calls the river Saint Vincent, which is now known as the Sino River in Liberia.⁶⁰¹ They sailed up the river, attempting to sell goods to the local residents, and eventually “went on land into a smalle Towne to see the fashions of the Countrey.”⁶⁰² After the Africans realized the visitors did not intend harm, they allowed them in. Towerson describes their homes as “hovels, all covered with great leaves and baggage, and all the sides open, and a scaffold under the house ... where they worke” to make wood-carvings, iron darts, and equipment for their boats. Towerson adds:

But when wee were there divers of the women to shew us pleasure
danced and sung after their maner, full ill to our ears. Their song was
thus:

Sakere, sakere, ho ho. Sakere, sakere, ho, ho.

And with these words they leape and dance and clap their hands.⁶⁰³

According to Towerson, the women wanted to give pleasure to the visitors, hence the reason for the performance. His own displeasure focuses on the singing, “full ill,” or jarring and inharmonious. The women “leape and dance and clap their hands” to accompany the song. As we saw in the previous chapter, dance in this time period is understood as coming from within music. So the dissonance of the singing here implies further discord within the danced movements. But Towerson does not spend time detailing imagined dancing bodies for his readers, even though in a few paragraphs above this description, he took time to write of the women with “breastes ... very foule

⁶⁰¹ Harry Hamilton Johnson, Otto Stapf, *Liberia*, Volume 1, (New York: Dodd, Mead, and Company, 1906) 63.

⁶⁰² “The first voyage of Master William Towrson Marchant ...” in *The Principal Navigations*, Vol 6, 185.

⁶⁰³ “The first voyage of Master William Towrson Marchant ...” in *The Principal Navigations*, Vol 6, 185.

and long, hanging downe low like the udder of a goate.”⁶⁰⁴ Putting these two descriptions together, then, Towerson composes imagined Black dancing women’s bodies leaping, with breasts hanging low, and clapping in time, while singing discordantly.

By including both of these descriptions, just a few paragraphs apart both Hakluyt and Towerson compose a performance for their readers to imagine through Towerson as the source of what happened and that which is said to have happened. Towerson operates as a source of what happened, in that he describes the bodies of West African women for his readers to imagine, like goats and then leaping, dancing, and clapping. Towerson also operates as a source of that which is said to have happened, because the women remain imagined in his written journal. Towerson, as an English merchant and spectator and man, arranges how the bodies should appear, individually and collectively, in the reader’s imagination. He focuses on their physical likeness to goats, which enables him to categorize these West African women through “degrees of humanity” by writing – and *negating* – them as less than human.⁶⁰⁵ But, he also composes them in relation to leaping and dancing, which may contrast his description of their low-hanging breasts. That is, even though he writes of their bodies in relation to animals and hanging towards the ground, while dancing, he composes their dancing bodies through the air. His overall composition of imagined Black dancing women’s bodies may evoke mobility and agility.

Yet, as Jennifer Morgan observes, early European sources on African peoples often invoked both “perceptions of beauty and assertions of monstrosity.”⁶⁰⁶ Namely, through the writing and

⁶⁰⁴ “The first voyage of Master William Towrson Marchant ...” in *The Principal Navigations*, Vol 6 (London: Hakluyt Company, 1965) 184.

⁶⁰⁵ Trouillot, *Silencing the Past*, 76.

⁶⁰⁶ Jennifer L. Morgan, *Laboring Women: Reproduction and Gender in New World Slavery* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2004) 15.

imagined of savage women's bodies, "beauty became beastliness and mothers became monstrous."⁶⁰⁷ Towerson's source, in particular, gives us "perhaps the first time an Englishman in Africa explicitly used breasts as an identifying trait of beastliness and difference."⁶⁰⁸ Morgan further shows how hanging breasts indicated savagery through writing and imagining through women's bodies, stretching back to "Pliny the Elder's ancient collection of monstrous races, *Historia Naturalis*, which catalogued the long-breasted wild woman."⁶⁰⁹ Medieval sources also depicted, "the medieval wild woman, whose breasts dragged on the ground when she walked and could be thrown over her shoulder."⁶¹⁰ The particular focus on breasts was significant, because "The shape of her body marked her deviant sexuality, and both shape and sexuality evidenced her savagery."⁶¹¹ Based on this lengthy tradition of writing and imagining savage women, "Explorers and travelers to the New World brought expectations of distended breasts and dangerous sexuality" to the Americas and to Africa.⁶¹²

Moreover, Towerson's source alludes to Cadamosto's written source on Canary Islanders, who leapt like goats from rock to rock, from the fifteenth century. Recall how Ramusio, who printed an Italian version of Cadamosto's journal in his first volume, shared documents with Hakluyt.

⁶⁰⁷ Morgan, *Laboring Women*, 16.

⁶⁰⁸ Morgan, *Laboring Women*, 27.

⁶⁰⁹ Morgan, *Laboring Women*, 16.

⁶¹⁰ Morgan, *Laboring Women*, 16.

⁶¹¹ Morgan, *Laboring Women*, 16.

⁶¹² Morgan, *Laboring Women*, 17. For more of Morgan's analysis how Europeans applied this to indigenous - American women, see 17-23.

Editors also shared unprinted documents with those whose accounts they wished to publish.⁶¹³ It is possible, then, that either Hakluyt or Towerson added in the goat and leaping imagery based on Cadamosto's fifteenth-century source from the Canary Islands. Thus, we should not be too quick to draw connotations of *human* agility and mobility to Towerson's usage of *leaping* alongside dancing, both of which come after his deployment of hanging breasts of imagined savage and African women. Taken together with his earlier paragraph, and Cadamosto's source, Towerson's overall composition evokes bestial leaps through the imagined savage bodies of African women. Put differently, the leaping and dancing written by Towerson, in relation to his deployment of savage women's bodies, disarticulates imagined Black dancing bodies from knowledge of human dancing.

I want to note, again, that we only *know* how the women's bodies physically appeared in that moment because of Towerson's use of hanging breasts and beastliness. Consequently, we also only know *how* the women's dancing bodies physically appeared because of Towerson's descriptions. Towerson's source still operates as that which was said to have happened: imagined and savage African women, with distended breasts, leaped and danced and sang discordantly. Towerson imagines and composes these women as inhuman, as capable of moving and dancing through the air, but qualified only to be compared to goats and savagery. These women's bodies, then, as sources of danced knowledge, carry and transmit the capability to leap like a goat, with their monstrous and bestial bodies. Towerson can establish this as an observed fact, because prior sources, like Cadamosto's, have already previously established the facts that Canary Islanders leap like goats. That is, just as Towerson writes the women's imagined bodies within already-established conventions of

⁶¹³ Margaret Small, "A World Seen Through Another's Eyes: Hakluyt, Ramusio, and the Narratives of *Navigazioni et Viaggi*," in *Richard Hakluyt and Travel Writing in Early Modern Europe* (45-55) 48. Joan-Pau Rubiés, "From the 'History of Travayle' to the History of Travel Collections," in *Richard Hakluyt and Travel Writing in Early Modern Europe*, 25-41.

invoking savagery through hanging breasts, he can also write the women's imagined dancing bodies within already-established conventions of negating African dance practices as inhuman, as far closer to movements of goats than anything European readers may associate as *human* dancing. The standard of dancing knowledge, by the middle of the sixteenth century, stood as the ideal noble body. And by creating a kinship between goats and imagined Black dancing bodies of West African women, Towerson works within "degrees of humanity" understood and expected by his readers.⁶¹⁴ Later writers, as we will see, also wielded "degrees of humanity" in relation to sub-Saharan Africans as imagined Black dancing bodies.

Richard Jobson's Journal | Two Versions by Samuel Purchas and One Version by Jobson

The next significant English-language source on West African dancing comes with the multiple publications of Richard Jobson on an overseas voyage in 1620-1621. Samuel Purchas, who edited and published two extracts from the voyage, inherited Hakluyt's papers, and continued collecting and editing travel writing.⁶¹⁵ "Purchas's publishing career lasted only from 1613 to 1626,"⁶¹⁶ in which he compiled and edited two projects: *Purchas His Pilgrimage* in three editions (1613, 1614, 1617), and a four-volume work entitled *Purchas His Pilgrimes* (1625).⁶¹⁷ Purchas's style differed significantly from

⁶¹⁴ Trouillot, *Silencing the Past*, 76.

⁶¹⁵ Carey and Jowitt, "Introduction," in *Richard Hakluyt and Travel Writing in Early Modern Europe*, 1; DR Ransome, "A Purchas Chronology," in *The Purchas Handbook: Studies of the Life, Times and Writings of Samuel Purchas, 1577-1626*, ed. LE Pennington, Vol 1, 329-380 (London: Hakluyt Society, 1997) 353.

⁶¹⁶ L. E. Pennington, "Samuel Purchas: His reputation and the uses of his works," in *The Purchas Handbook*, 5 (3-118).

⁶¹⁷ Ransome, "A Purchas Chronology," in *The Purchas Handbook*, 340, 342, 348, 351-355, 363, 365-366.

Hakluyt's, in that he frequently shortened and revised travel accounts, to "prevent duplication with other travellers to the same regions" and to remove content he judged inappropriate or boring.⁶¹⁸ Purchas acquired several connections in the merchant class and aristocracy, "though he never achieved the status of Richard Hakluyt as a consultant to the movers and shakers of English overseas activities."⁶¹⁹ Specifically, Purchas "had connections among important members of both the Virginia Company of London ... and the East Indian Company."⁶²⁰ Along with later editors of travel writing, seventeenth-century English dramatists, like John Dryden and perhaps even William Shakespeare, also used the sources printed by Purchas.⁶²¹

In addition to the two lengthy extracts published by Purchas in *Pilgrimes*, volume 2, Jobson published his own version of the journal, entitled *The Golden Trade*.⁶²² The voyage was financed by the recently-formed Guinea Company.⁶²³ David P. Gamble and P. E. H. Hair note, "The exact role of Jobson in the 1620-21 voyage is far from clear, partly because we know nothing of his earlier career and little of what followed."⁶²⁴ In the journal, Jobson indicates that the company's chief factor

⁶¹⁸ Urness, "Purchas as Editor," in *The Purchas Handbook*, 128 (121-144).

⁶¹⁹ Pennington, "Samuel Purchas: His reputation and the uses of his works," in *The Purchas Handbook*, 5.

⁶²⁰ Pennington, "Samuel Purchas: His reputation and the uses of his works," in *The Purchas Handbook*, 5.

⁶²¹ Pennington, "Samuel Purchas: His reputation and the uses of his works," in *The Purchas Handbook*, 8. For Shakespeare's use, the source in dispute is 'A true repertory of the wracke, and redemption of Sir Thomas Gates, Knight; upon and from the Islands of the Bermudas,' by William Strachey, published in *Pilgrimes*, vol 4, pp. 1734-1758. See also Roger A. Stritmatter and Lynne Kositsky, *On the Date, Sources, and Design of Shakespeare's The Tempest* (Jefferson, NC: McFarland & Company, Inc., Publishers, 2013).

⁶²² Carol Urness, "Purchas as an Editor," in *The Purchas Handbook*, 134 (121-144).

⁶²³ "Introduction," in *The Discovery of River Gambia (1623)*, eds. David P. Gamble and P.E.H. Hair (1-72) (London: The Hakluyt Society, 1999) 31.

⁶²⁴ "Introduction," in *The Discovery of River Gambia (1623)*, 27.

(or agent), Lowe, ranked above him. In a later petition to King Charles, well after the voyage concluded, Jobson complained about merchants, leading Gamble and Hair to conclude Jobson was not part of the merchant class. Based on Jobson's infrequent comparisons between West Africans and Irish, Gamble and Hair leave open the possibility for Jobson to have participated in colonization and conquest efforts there. But, based on the organization of the Guinea Company, in that "the Governor of the Company 1620 was a former naval commander and the members included the Lord High Admiral and other naval officers," Gamble and Hair also argue, "it is conceivable that Jobson was employed through Admiralty connections."⁶²⁵ It is also unclear, from the surviving sources, how Jobson and Purchas came into contact, whether through Company agents or other means; but, Jobson credits Purchas with convincing him to publish the journal.⁶²⁶

The Guinea Company financed at least two voyages prior to 1620, all of them "searching for trade opportunities and the source of gold in the region."⁶²⁷ Jobson and his men navigated "some 150 miles up the river" Gambia, and at the time, Jobson's journal was "the earliest detailed account of the River Gambia region, in print."⁶²⁸ Jobson's journal itself did not survive; we have only the published versions of extracts and the larger book.⁶²⁹ The records of the Guinea Company, which may have held reports written by Jobson and by others on the previous voyages financed under the

⁶²⁵ "Introduction," in *The Discovery of River Gambia* (1623), 39.

⁶²⁶ "Introduction," in *The Discovery of River Gambia* (1623), 2; Urness, "Purchas as Editor," in *The Purchas Handbook*, 134.

⁶²⁷ Urness, "Purchas as Editor," in *The Purchas Handbook*, 134.

⁶²⁸ "Introduction," in *The Discovery of River Gambia* (1623), 7-8; several accounts of Portuguese exploration, both in the twenty years prior to and after Jobson, were not published in the seventeenth century. Gamble and Hair imply that these Portuguese accounts were not made widely available until much later; but they do not specify when.

⁶²⁹ Urness, "Purchas as Editor," in *The Purchas Handbook*, 134; "Introduction," in *The Discovery of River Gambia* (1623), 3-4.

company, also have not survived.⁶³⁰ The order of publication was as follows: Purchas began the printing process for *Pilgrimes* in 1621, and the process took until 1625 to complete. The sections in which the Jobson extracts appeared went to be printed between 1622 and 1623. As Gamble and Hair note, then, “It would seem very likely, therefore, that Purchas had the Jobson pieces in print, although not published, before Jobson’s book appeared.”⁶³¹ These versions, then, came into press already in conversation with each other; and each version has a unique description of dancing.

EXTRACTS OF JOBSON’S JOURNAL IN *PURCHAS HIS PILGRIMS*

The second extract of Jobson’s journal, printed in Book 9 of *Pilgrimes*, has minimal descriptions, and nothing exaggerating the physical appearance of the local Mandinka population.⁶³² The one note on physical appearance occurs in relation to the Fulbies, the people group, other than the Mandinka, residing along the river Gambia. Jobson and Purchas designate them as “a tawny People, much like to those vagrants among us, called Egyptians.”⁶³³ Jobson uses Egyptians as the word for gypsies, noting that the Fulbies’ tawny color, although lighter than Black, does not grant the Fulbies greater humanity.⁶³⁴ This phrasing also implies that Black, as a skin color, marks the lowest of humanity. Thus, even though the Fulbies exceed the expectations of skin color in this area of the world, they

⁶³⁰ “Introduction,” in *The Discovery of River Gambia* (1623), 2 fn 2.

⁶³¹ See “Introduction,” in *The Discovery of River Gambia* (1623), 1 fn 4.

⁶³² “Larger observations of Master Richard Jobson, touching the River Gambia, with the People, Merchandise, and Creatures of those parts, then in his Journall is containned, gathered out of his Notes,” in *Purchas his Pilgrimes : in five booke: the first, containning the voyages and peregrinations made by ancient kings ... and others, to and thorow ...*, ed., Samuel Purchas, Vol 2, Book 9, Chap 13, 1567-1576 (London: Printed by William Stansby for Henrie Fetherstone, 1625).

⁶³³ “Larger observations of Master Richard Jobson ...” in *Purchas His Pilgrimes*, Vol 2, 1570.

⁶³⁴ See Geraldo U de Sousa, *Shakespeare’s Cross-Cultural Encounters* (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1999) 129-158.

do not approach the European ideal human. Jobson and Purchas include another compliment, specifically to Fulbie women as, “well featured, with a long blacke hair, more loose than that of the Black women, neatly apparrelled.”⁶³⁵ As Jennifer Morgan observes, Jobson’s “appreciation ... was predicated on their ability to exceed his expectations.”⁶³⁶ That is, Jobson and Purchas knew their readers expected unruly hair and deviant bodies.

By mentioning the beauty of Fulbie women, Jobson and Purchas rank West African women within “degrees of humanity,” even though neither group approaches the European ideal human. The mentioning of loose or neat, that is, *good*, hair, still negates both Mandinka and Fulbie women from humanity. It displaces Fulbie women from the ideal human, because Jobson and Purchas only include light skin color and good hair as ideal features that are *not quite good enough*. This tactic likewise displaces Mandinka women from the ideal human, because they have *neither* the lighter skin color *nor* the good hair of the Fulbie women. Jobson and Purchas relate “degrees of humanity” to degrees of silencing, in that imagined Black bodies who surpass the less-than-human expectations of European spectators attain a greater comparative presence. Making present the *not as* savage Fulbies deepens the silence around Mandinka as the expected inhuman savage from within sub-Saharan Africa.

In relation to music and dancing, Jobson and Purchase first write how, “No other people is more addicted to Musicke, their Kings or principall persons being accompanied with their Juddies or Fiddlers.”⁶³⁷ Jobson and Purchas are describing processions in honor of a person in power, and noting the use of music as excessive and addictive. They do so, even though they and their readers

⁶³⁵ “Larger observations of Master Richard Jobson ...” in *Purchas His Pilgrimes*, Vol 2, 1570.

⁶³⁶ Morgan, *Laboring Women*, 28.

⁶³⁷ “Larger observations of Master Richard Jobson ...” in *Purchas His Pilgrimes*, Vol 2, 1573.

would be familiar with longstanding European practices of elaborate royal entries.⁶³⁸ They imply, then, that the music accompanying these particular Mandinka processions does not adhere to the decorum standards of European courts. Jobson and Purchas also briefly mention dancing, commenting how the Mandinka “spend whole nights in Dancing, each person Male or Female single.”⁶³⁹ Here, Jobson and Purchas invite their readers to imagine Mandinka as Black bodies dancing all through the nights, one by one. And from their earlier words on the surprising beauty of Fulbie women, Jobson and Purchas imply indecorous and savage Mandinka bodies dancing at night. By specifically calling out the singular performers, Jobson and Purchas also distinguish Mandinka dancing from European social dances. The importance of this distinction will be clarified by Jobson’s longer publication.

Overall, however, this version composes Mandinka as addicted to music and to dancing, whether in their version of noble processions or in nightly excursions. Like Towerson and Hakluyt before them, Jobson and Purchas operate as sources of what happened and that which is said to have happened. Namely, according to Jobson and Purchas, Mandinka dance as though addicted to music and performance. Their excessive desire for music and dance reveals itself in their nightly dancing performances. We only know that Mandinka dance constantly, in announcing and attending their king, and every evening, because of how Jobson and Purchas write about them here. If this were the only version of Jobson’s writing published, European readers would come away imagining

⁶³⁸ See, for example, Lawrence M. Bryant, *The King and the City in the Parisian Royal Entry Ceremony: Politics, Ritual, and Art in the Renaissance* (Genève, France: Librairie Droz S.A., 1986); Tess Knighton and Carmen Morte García, “Ferdinand of Aragon’s Entry into Valladolid in 1513: The Triumph of a Christian King,” in *Early Music History* 18 (Oct 1999): 119-163; J. R. Mulryne et. al., eds., *Europa Triumphans: Court and Civic Festivals in Early Modern Europe* (Farnham, United Kingdom: Ashgate Publishing, Ltd., 2010).

⁶³⁹ “Larger observations of Master Richard Jobson ...” in *Purchas His Pilgrimes*, Vol 2, 1573.

Black dancing bodies along the river Gambia as constantly dancing and singing, to the point of forgetting to sleep. And even when the West Africans, as imagined Black dancing bodies, performed within a royal entry of a local king, their dancing did not approach the ideally human decorous dancing of European royal retinues and courts.

In the first extract, printed in Book 7 of *Pilgrimes*, Jobson and Purchas do not include any descriptions of West Africans as exaggerated or beastly bodies, nor as surprisingly beautiful bodies.⁶⁴⁰ In this version, Jobson and Purchas give a more specific context for the noble processions, and more details for the night dancing. Their documentation of a processional or entry is more clearly tied to Buckor Sano, a leading representative (whom they call a merchant) for the king of Jalakoto.⁶⁴¹ When the king of Jalakoto comes to meet the Europeans, “his Juddies or Fiddlers ... [played] before him and his wives, such being the fashion of the great ones.”⁶⁴² At the king’s arrival, Buckor Sano asks the Europeans if he might be named their representative (or alcaide) for trading with the king.⁶⁴³ Jobson agrees, gives Sano two necklaces, orders his men to shoot their muskets, and they all proclaim “Alcaide, alcaide.”⁶⁴⁴ After receiving this honor, Buckor Sano directs his fiddlers to play before him and his wives, and presents himself to the king for his approval as the

⁶⁴⁰ “A true Relation of Master Richard Jobsons Voyage, employed by Sir William Saint John Knight, and others; for the Discoverie of Gambia ... Extracted out of his large Journall,” in *Purchas his Pilgrimes: in five bookes: the first, containyng the voyages and peregrinations made by ancient kings ... and others, to and thorow ...*, ed., Samuel Purchas, Vol 2, Book 7, Chap 1, 921-926 (London: Printed by William Stansby for Henrie Fetherstone, 1625).

⁶⁴¹ Cf Jobson, *The Golden Trade* in *The Discovery of River Gambia* (1623), 137.

⁶⁴² “A true Relation of Master Richard Jobsons Voyage ...” in *Purchas His Pilgrimes*, Vol 2, 924.

⁶⁴³ Jobson and Purchas write the word as alchade, a transliteration of the Portuguese term, alcaide (which was related to the Spanish term, alcalde, both of which come from the Arabic al qaid). See Jobson, *The Golden Trade* in *The Discovery of the River Gambia* (1623), 123 fn 2.

⁶⁴⁴ “A true Relation of Master Richard Jobsons Voyage ...” in *Purchas His Pilgrimes*, Vol 2, 924.

go-between for the Europeans and the king in this region. The king agrees, granting trading privileges to Jobson and Buckor Sano. Buckor Sano presents himself and his arms to Jobson, and his men follow. Jobson and Purchas write, “Then began others to dance after their fashion,” while several speeches were made to commemorate the occasion.⁶⁴⁵

In this Book 7 version, then, Jobson and Purchas write of musical accompaniment for the king of Jalakoto’s entrance and for Buckor Sano’s increase in trading status. They describe very little of the actual danced movements or rhythms for this particular occasion. If readers encountered just this description, then, they may imagine the aristocratic-merchant relationship of king of Jalakoto and Buckor Sano through their own understanding of English royal patronage of merchant ventures. The writing remains vague enough that readers could imagine the fiddling as either noble or less-than-noble. Taken with the second printed extract, however, readers could understand this description as one specific example of how West Africans were addicted to playing indecorous music regardless of the occasion.

In this printed version, the night dancing occurs only with the circumcision rites as partially witnessed by Jobson and his men. The longer extract, in Book 9, contains brief information about the method of cutting within the circumcision rite, but very little contextual detail. In this Book 7 version, however, Jobson and Purchas write of the local guide and translator, a young boy they call Samgully. When Jobson and his men return to Samgully’s village, they hear “Shoutes, Drummes and Countrey Musicke.”⁶⁴⁶ Jobson and Purchas describe the circumcision atmosphere “like an English Faire.”⁶⁴⁷ Specifically, “Under everie great tree, and among all their houses at night were fires

⁶⁴⁵ “A true Relation of Master Richard Jobsons Voyage ...” in *Purchas His Pilgrimes*, Vol 2, 924.

⁶⁴⁶ “A true Relation of Master Richard Jobsons Voyage ...” in *Purchas His Pilgrimes*, Vol 2, 925.

⁶⁴⁷ “A true Relation of Master Richard Jobsons Voyage ...” in *Purchas His Pilgrimes*, Vol 2, 925.

without doores, and in especial places dancing.”⁶⁴⁸ On the women’s dancing, Jobson and Purchas note, “The women for the most part dance with strange bending of their bodies, and cringing of their knees, their legges crooked.”⁶⁴⁹ In relation to European court decorum, Jobson and Purchas write these women as indecorous and imagined Black dancing bodies. They describe the dancing bodies as strange, cringing, and crooked, implying danced movements that bring the body closer to the ground through bent posture. That is, by mentioning a body as bent and crooked, Jobson and Purchas concurrently silence the vertical capability of these dancing bodies. Whether or not the women leaped, we will never know, because Jobson and Purchas chose only to write of cringing and strange dancing bodies. These dancing bodies, while accompanied by “the standers by keeping a time in clapping their hands together to grace the dance,” do not evoke the grace or fluid flexibility prized in court philosophies of dancing throughout Europe.

To be clear, I am arguing that Jobson and Purchas made several choices in how they decided to write about West African women here. Whether or not they themselves made a *conscious* and *aware* decision to relate West African women to bent and crooked bodies, their work includes only this embodied imagery. They chose not to print any descriptions of the women’s physical bodies, whether as savage or as having good hair. They chose to print descriptions of crooked legs and bent knees, whether or not this was the only danced movement which occurred in the performance. They created and composed imagined Black dancing bodies as evidence of indecorous movements, as moving along closely to the ground, accompanied by clapping, drums, shouts, and their music. Jobson and Purchas wield bent-ness and cringing bodies as what happened, that is, the kind of dancing that happened there in that moment. Because we only know of women’s crooked knees and

⁶⁴⁸ “A true Relation of Master Richard Jobsons Voyage ...” in *Purchas His Pilgrimes*, Vol 2, 925.

⁶⁴⁹ “A true Relation of Master Richard Jobsons Voyage ...” in *Purchas His Pilgrimes*, Vol 2, 925.

bent bodies based on their writing, Jobson and Purchas, in turn, serve as that which is said to have happened. In other words, Jobson and Purchase wrote down what happened in relation to these imagined Black dancing bodies of West African women. Jobson and Purchas printed it, and thereby serve as sources of that which is said to have happened.

According to this version, Mandinka men also danced during the circumcision festivities. Jobson and Purchas write, “If the men dance, it is one alone with such Swords as they weare, naked in his hand, with which he acteth.”⁶⁵⁰ We get very little description of the men’s bodies and movements, except that they act or move, one by one, with an unprotected sword in their hands. Here, Jobson and Purchas imply and evoke mock combat without going into detail. In contrast to the women, the men’s imagined dancing bodies move in athletic or martial motions. Jobson and Purchas, again, do not mention leaping alongside the dancing or the mock combat, an anomaly for the seventeenth century European records. All of the imagined dancing bodies written by Jobson and Purchas in this version appear on the ground or moving over the ground. Whether or not Jobson witnessed leaping or airborne movements, neither Jobson nor Purchas included that in the printed versions of the voyage. In English-language writing, Jobson and Purchas offer the first fully grounded source, as in a completely earthbound composition, on West African dancing along the river Gambia.

RICHARD JOBSON’S *THE GOLDEN TRADE* | PUBLISHED AS A STAND-ALONE BOOK

When Jobson printed a longer, stand-alone, version of his voyage as *The Golden Trade*, he rearranged the text significantly. He “abandoned chronology and presented an analytical account,” creating

⁶⁵⁰ “A true Relation of Master Richard Jobsons Voyage ...” in *Purchas His Pilgrimes*, Vol 2, 925.

thematic sections about “climate, ethnography, and natural history.”⁶⁵¹ Overall, “Jobson provided an interesting, sometimes lively, and generally novel account of a region not previously known to English readers.”⁶⁵² In *The Golden Trade*, Jobson included information about the river, and then the inhabitants. Within the first few pages of this second section, he describes Fulbie women’s beauty. He again compares their tawny coloring to Egyptians or gypsies, elaborating, “the women amongst them are streight, upright, and excellently well bodied, having very good features, with a long blacke hair, much more loose then the blacke women have.”⁶⁵³ Jobson repeats his notes on the good hair of the Fulbie women. He adds notes about their posture as “streight, upright, and excellently well bodied,” emphasizing an upright carriage, and marking another unexpected difference. By mentioning Fulbie women in relation to verticality, by composing them in linear alignment from foot to crown, Jobson writes and imagines them as the exception. With this tactic, he also implies that Fulbie women, being from and within West Africa, should not adhere to an upright or vertical posture. Meaning, he leads his readers to the expectation of imagining non-linear or bent Black bodies in most African locations. By highlighting and making present vertical alignment in Fulbie women, Jobson highlights the growing importance of a vertical center within European court decorum. And by emphasizing this decorous, vertical *exception* in Fulbie women in West Africa, he foreshadows the crooked or bent, imagined and less-than-human, bodies in the pages to come.⁶⁵⁴

⁶⁵¹ “Introduction,” in *Discovery of the River Gambia* (1623), 4.

⁶⁵² “Introduction,” in *Discovery of the River Gambia* (1623), 4.

⁶⁵³ *The Golden Trade*, in *Discovery of the River Gambia* (1623), 100.

⁶⁵⁴ Jobson also spends time describing Fulbie men as bestial, because of their lived closeness to tending herds and moving with them from the mountains, to plains, to river (*The Golden Trade*, in *Discovery of the River Gambia* (1623), 101). Jobson also takes time to describe the unusually large penises of Mandinka men later on, attributing this physical feature to the curse of Ham (*The Golden Trade*, in *Discovery of the River Gambia* (1623), 114-115).

For Buckor Sano, Jobson devotes considerably more pages to the encounter. He writes how Buckor Sano arrived, “with his musicke playing before him, with great solemnity, and his best clothes on.”⁶⁵⁵ In addition to musical accompaniment for his entry, Buckor Sano had his men with him, “armed with their bows and arrowes,” as well as a large community following him a few hours behind.⁶⁵⁶ Jobson describes lengthy trade discussions over specific items, and how Buckor Sano traveled with such an extensive following. In this version, Buckor Sano takes dinner with Jobson on board the English boat for several consecutive nights. Each night, Jobson and his men then travel on shore for entertainment at either the king’s house or at Buckor Sano’s. Mats would be spread before the doors, with fires lit, “the Fidlers plaide on their Musicke, and in dawncing and singing, and sometimes the men marching with their bows and arrowes to show their warlike exercises we spent great part of the evening.”⁶⁵⁷ In this version, then, evening entertainment extends to the king and Buckor Sano hosting Jobson and his men. With this added context, it remains unclear if Jobson witnessed dance performances every evening and at every stop of his trip up the river Gambia. For instance, he may have potentially extrapolated this experience out to asserting the Mandinka danced every night. But, in this version, so far, Jobson describes evening dancing and mock combat in relation to being an honored guest of Buckor Sano and the king of Jalakoto. He has not yet asked his readers to imagine a nightly recurrence of dancing with little to no context.

In this same paragraph, Jobson adds more new information about the Europeans. He remarks, “wee were not behind hand to let them heare our powder, and see our manner of marching.”⁶⁵⁸ Jobson depicts a scene where Europeans and Mandinka display and exchange their

⁶⁵⁵ *The Golden Trade*, in *Discovery of the River Gambra* (1623), 138.

⁶⁵⁶ *The Golden Trade*, in *Discovery of the River Gambra* (1623), 138.

⁶⁵⁷ *The Golden Trade*, in *Discovery of the River Gambra* (1623), 145.

⁶⁵⁸ *The Golden Trade*, in *Discovery of the River Gambra* (1623), 145.

combat practices. The Mandinka showed their dances, songs, and their military drills. In return, the Europeans also displayed their guns and their marching styles. As we will see in a few pages, Jobson's account contrasts to contemporaries like Pieter de Marees on the Gold Coast, and writers like Willem Bosman who copied de Marees's descriptions for their own work. In each case, these other European writers included leaping as a significant aspect of military drills in West Africa.⁶⁵⁹ For Jobson, however, both the Mandinka and the Europeans march along the ground, each in their own manner.

While Jobson leaves out any descriptions of the Mandinka's marching or combat styles of movement, he focuses "his open-eye gaze primarily at African male sexuality."⁶⁶⁰ Jennifer Morgan observes, "In a unique twist on the consequences of the curse of Ham, Jobson maintained that African men carried the mark of the curse in the size of their sexual organs."⁶⁶¹ Jobson periodically comments on the size of Mandinka men's penises, and their adverse effect on women. When writing that a husband and wife refrain from sexual intercourse after conception, he asserts this is necessary so the man "will not destroy what is conceived," and also avoid "danger to the bearer."⁶⁶² He also

⁶⁵⁹ In West Central Africa, both Cavazzi and van den Broecke described leaping within noble displays before the king or queen, and combat exercises. Giovanni Antonio Cavazzi, "Missione evangelica nel Regno de Congo," transl. and ed., John Thornton, Book 1, Chapter 5, <http://www.bu.edu/afam/faculty/john-thornton/cavazzi-missione-evangelica-2/book-1-chapter-5/>; Book 2, Chapter 8, <http://www.bu.edu/afam/faculty/john-thornton/cavazzi-missione-evangelica-2/book-2-chapter-8/>. See also John Thornton, "Introduction" <http://www.bu.edu/afam/faculty/john-thornton/cavazzi-missione-evangelica-2/>. J. D. La Fleur, transl. and ed., *Pieter van den Broecke's Journal of Voyages to Cape Verde, Guinea and Angola (1605-1612)* (London: The Hakluyt Society, 2000) 95-97.

⁶⁶⁰ Morgan, *Laboring Women*, 29.

⁶⁶¹ Morgan, *Laboring Women*, 29.

⁶⁶² *The Golden Trade in Discovery of the River Gambia (1623)*, 114-115.

compares Mandinka men to horses, further emphasizing bestial nature of their bodies, and the danger to pregnant Mandinka women.⁶⁶³ Taken together, then, while Jobson does not deride the combat exercises or marching styles, he has fashioned an imagined Black Mandinka body with abnormally large sexual organs, more comparable to a horse than a human man. His attention to Mandinka men negates their embodiment of humanity, and displaces their marching and combat exercises as less-than-human, a spectacle of bestial approximation of human movement.

In *The Golden Trade*, Jobson includes more notes about Mandinka royal entries or processions. He explains, “There is, without doubt, no people on the earth more naturally affected to the sound of musicke then these people, which the principall persons do hold as an ornament of their state.”⁶⁶⁴ Specifically, “when wee come to see them, their musicke will seldome be wanting.”⁶⁶⁵ Jobson asserts, here, that the Mandinka have an unusual affection for music. He supports this by explaining how “principall persons,” ie their kings or major traders, use music as an integral part of their official entourage. That is, whenever Europeans visited important figures in Mandinka society, Jobson claims that they always heard music. This differs from his earlier description of indecorous royal entries, but he does later state, when the kings or merchants approach Europeans to trade, “they will have their musicke playing before them.”⁶⁶⁶ Jobson, then, depicts the Mandinka affection for music always in relation to European presence and trade negotiations. He remarks specifically on the position of a praise singer, whom he compares to “the Irish Rimer sitting in the same maner as they doe upon the ground, somewhat remote from the company.”⁶⁶⁷ The praise singer, like an Irish

⁶⁶³ *The Golden Trade* in *Discovery of the River Gambia* (1623), 114-115.

⁶⁶⁴ *The Golden Trade* in *Discovery of the River Gambia* (1623), 150-151.

⁶⁶⁵ *The Golden Trade* in *Discovery of the River Gambia* (1623), 150-151.

⁶⁶⁶ *The Golden Trade* in *Discovery of the River Gambia* (1623), 151.

⁶⁶⁷ *The Golden Trade* in *Discovery of the River Gambia* (1623), 150-151.

bard, extols “the auncient stock of the King, exalting his ancestry, and recounting over all the worthy and famous acts by him or them hath been atchieved.”⁶⁶⁸ Praise singers, according to Jobson, have the ability to improvise tributes to their ruler and patron, and “they will not forget in our presence to sing in the praise of us white men.”⁶⁶⁹

The music Jobson and his men heard, which Jobson claims substantiates his depiction of “people ... more naturally affected to the sound of musicke,” happened solely in the presence of Europeans. When the Europeans approached a major trading figure, whether king or noble or merchant, they heard a praise singer extolling the genealogy, virtues, and great deeds of their local African ruler. When the Europeans hosted a major trading figure and their envoy, they also heard the music and praises preceding the Mandinka official’s entrance. Additionally, the Europeans noticed praise singers extolling their virtues as white men. In other words, even though Jobson claims an unusual affection or affinity for music on the part of Mandinka, which in a previous version had been accompanied by a related affection or affinity for dancing all through the night, his only evidence comes from engaging in trade negotiations with Mandinka officials along the river.

For his readers, Jobson can solely depict what happened in European presence, thus serving as a source of that which is said to have happened *only* when Mandinka meet with Europeans. But, because we examined (in the previous chapter) how European court decorum meant to reflect and shape an aristocratic ruler’s governance, we understand Jobson can draw on these experiences with Mandinka nobles and traders to make a broader claim about the people in general. Meaning that Jobson implies: if Mandinka kings and significant merchants are constantly playing music and having praise singers extol their virtues, this indecorous affinity (or *addiction*, from his version published with

⁶⁶⁸ *The Golden Trade in Discovery of the River Gambia* (1623), 150-151.

⁶⁶⁹ *The Golden Trade in Discovery of the River Gambia* (1623), 150-151.

Purchas) to musical performances evidences an underlying chaos throughout this region of Africa. And again, because of Jobson's focus on the bestial characteristics of Mandinka men's sexual organs, he invites readers to imagine Black and Mandinka male bodies as indecorous, no matter where or how they appear in his publication. Imagined Black and male bodies, as sources of bestial characteristics, reflect the savage chaos along the river Gambia and the savagery of the music in which they overindulge (that is, overindulge as compared to the ideal European human).

After moving through his explanations on the Mandinka rulers' excessive love of music and praise singers, Jobson describes the musical instruments there. One of them, which he compares to the xylophone, is the Mandinka balafon.⁶⁷⁰ He comments on the relative scarcity of this particular instrument. But, when the balafon arrives at a village, "both day and night, more especially all the night the people continue dauncing."⁶⁷¹ On these occasions, "the most desirous of dancing are the women, who dance without men, and but one alone, with crooked knees and bended bodies they foot it nimbly."⁶⁷² Jobson again calls his readers' attention to the women dancing alone, one by one, without a man as a partner. He fashions these women's imagined Black dancing bodies similarly as his previous version, repeating the crooked and bent imagery. This time, he explicitly highlights the entire body as bent, emphasizing the indecorous lack of vertical alignment in Mandinka women's dancing.

Jobson further comments that the women "foot it nimbly," implying steps quickly-moving underneath bent knees and bodies. This is the first hint at a literally dismembered Black dancing body, as Jobson focuses in on the knees and feet. He does place the knees and feet in context of an entirely bent body, however, depicting an indecorous whole defying the European ideal of a noble,

⁶⁷⁰ Jobson does not write it as a balafon. See *The Golden Trade in Discovery of the River Gambia* (1623), 152 fn 1.

⁶⁷¹ *The Golden Trade in Discovery of the River Gambia* (1623), 152.

⁶⁷² *The Golden Trade in Discovery of the River Gambia* (1623), 152.

vertical human. He then mentions, as before, the bystanders clapping to keep time, and also the men's sword dances: "when the men dance they doe it with their swords naked in their hands, with which they use some action."⁶⁷³ As before, he includes little description of mock combat movements, but the bestial imagery of the men recurs throughout. In this version, then, women and men dance all night, one by one, in the context of the balafon coming to their village or town. These notes amplify and further substantiate Jobson's insistence on Mandinka overindulgence or excessive affinity for both music and dance.

Finally, Jobson's writing on the circumcision rite differs significantly in *The Golden Trade*, in that he introduces more descriptions of performance exchanges between Africans and Europeans. On arriving at the location of the rite, Jobson describes their local guide and translator Samgully, "began to leape and sing, making great shewes of joy, holding up his hand, and pointing towards the towne."⁶⁷⁴ Samgully realizes the significance of the drums and shouting. According to Jobson, Samgully explains about the circumcision rite and that he was old enough to participate. This is the only time where Jobson notes leaping in relation to singing and dancing, and it appears in a spontaneous show of excitement on the part of an uncircumcised Mandinka boy.

At the rite, Jobson finds dinner at the town master's house, where he found praise singers and "the best musicke."⁶⁷⁵ He writes how he observes the young women watching the praise singers' dancing. Then, so "that they might see we had such pleasures amongst us; I tooke one of them by the hand and daunced with her."⁶⁷⁶ Jobson initiates an exchange of performance practices to partner and social dancing. He remarks, "they gave testimony of great gladness" at the dancing exhibition,

⁶⁷³ *The Golden Trade* in *Discovery of the River Gambia* (1623), 152.

⁶⁷⁴ *The Golden Trade* in *Discovery of the River Gambia* (1623), 154.

⁶⁷⁵ *The Golden Trade* in *Discovery of the River Gambia* (1623), 155.

⁶⁷⁶ *The Golden Trade* in *Discovery of the River Gambia* (1623), 155.

“inviting the rest of my company to do the like.”⁶⁷⁷ Jobson and his men move from spectators to participants and instructors, taking young Mandinka women and showing them how to dance European social styles. Jobson and his men may have demonstrated any number of dances, including the basse dance or branle, as well as the A Soldier’s Life, The Milkmaid’s Bob, or Stanes Morris from *The Dancing Master*.⁶⁷⁸ Jobson does not indicate a change in rhythm or music, or that his own musicians took up performing. He insists the opposite, in fact, that he never allowed the accompanying European musicians to play in front of the Mandinka, in fear of local burial practices for musicians.⁶⁷⁹ During the circumcision celebrations, then, the Europeans and Mandinka would have executed their social or country dances to the rhythms and music of the Mandinka praise singers.

In Jobson’s account of this moment, the imagined European and male dancing bodies take central focus, invoking a corrective and humanizing presence on several levels. Jobson invites his readers to imagine a complex physical interaction between European men’s bodies and Mandinka women’s bodies in the moment of this dance. Mandinka women are no longer alone and unpartnered, dancing singly one by one. They are also no longer followed by Mandinka men’s sword dancing, also unpartnered and with unusually large penises factored into their movements. Instead, Jobson depicts him and his men pulling Mandinka women within the dancing space of European movements. In emphasizing the feet, knees, and bent bodies of Mandinka women previously, Jobson here implies the European male body bringing Mandinka women in partnered and a more vertical alignment. Given the bestial imagery associated all along with the Mandinka men, Jobson

⁶⁷⁷ *The Golden Trade in Discovery of the River Gambia* (1623), 155.

⁶⁷⁸ John Playford, *The English Dancing Master, or Plaine and easie Rules for the Dancing of Country Dances, with the Tune to each Dance* (London: Thomas Harper, 1651) 65, 75, 87.

⁶⁷⁹ *The Golden Trade in Discovery of the River Gambia* (1623), 153.

writes in fully clothed, and *less sexually dangerous*, European dance partners for the Mandinka women. It is, of course, entirely possible that Jobson and his men *invited* the women to dance and did not necessarily compel or coerce them. But, Jobson writes of it as taking a woman. And, given his overall focus on bestial, sexually dangerous Mandinka men, and women dancing alone, one by one, within these parameters, his composition evokes conquest and coercion, *whether or not* Jobson and his men held the upper hand of power in the moment of physical dancing.

It remains unclear if Jobson and his men compelled the women into dances aligned with strict court decorum, or if they compelled them into the less decorous, European country dances of the time period. But, earlier he writes how the imagined Black dancing bodies of the Mandinka women “foot it nimbly,” with crooked knees and bent bodies, in implied contrast to European decorum of dance as *written* knowledge of the ideal and vertical human. Pulling them into a partnered dance, with European men, writes the Mandinka women’s imagined bodies into a more decorous and more constrained space of European humanity. Whether or not Jobson and his men compelled the women to execute precise steps, gestures, and postures of the movements which would characterize ballet, the image of European men pulling Mandinka women’s Black bodies into a dance, a dance where they would come into direct and repeated contact with clothed men, evokes coercion and conquest as a legitimately *safer* dancing space for Mandinka women. Correcting and humanizing the crooked, bent, and imagined Black dancing bodies of the Mandinka women relates directly to the forces of colonization and conquest as *rescue* from the imagined Black and male sexual predator.

In their combined versions of Mandinka dancing, Jobson and Purchas methodically created and forged imagined Black dancing bodies deserving of conquest. Mandinka obsession and addiction to music and dancing, which led to them regularly staying up all night, indicated a generally chaotic and savage culture without decorum or regulation. Mandinka male sexual organs interfered

with spousal sexual relations, and put Mandinka women in constant danger. The danger of Mandinka men's large penises, in turn, implied an indecorous execution of marching and combat exercises in service of the kings, nobles, and merchants. Even though Mandinka men posed a direct threat to their own women, Jobson and Purchas repeatedly imply that the Black bodies interfered with military prowess and dancing with swords.

Mandinka women, as repeatedly dancing alone and unable to have proper sexual relations with their men, were left with crooked and bent bodies, although very adept and agile feet. Fully clothed European male partners resolved multiple dangers to Mandinka women, intervening and disrupting the unpartnered men dancing with naked swords and unusually large sexual organs. Overall, then, the imagined Black dancing bodies of Mandinka women emerged as evidence of sub-Saharan women's need to be physically rescued and corrected by European decorum, as taught and enforced by physical contact and governance by European men. In contrast, the imagined Black dancing bodies of Mandinka men emerged as evidence of physical and military weakness in relation to European men, as well as sources of physical and bestial danger to the women of their people group. Jobson and Purchas wielded "degrees of humanity" to position Mandinka women below Mandinka men, according to local power structures. Thus, Mandinka women *need* rescue or elevation, by European men, into a higher rank of humanity (but still less-human than Europeans).

As with Towerson, we only *know* Mandinka women require European men to rescue them because of Jobson and Purchas. Jobson and Purchas relay, for their readers, different but complementary versions of what happened along the river Gambia. What happened? Constant and excessive music accompanied the local kings and traders, who hosted the Europeans. What happened? Mandinka men danced with swords, despite their extended and unusually large sexual organs. Their bestial bodies, more like horses than men, rendered them incapable of having proper sexual relations with their women and presented a sexually dangerous predator, in need of

neutralizing by fully clothed, European men. Through all of these varying versions, Jobson and Purchas serve as sources of that which is said to have happened in Mandinka cultures, *writing* the European man as a corrective and humanizing presence towards preserving and narrating history, and towards rescuing Mandinka women from Mandinka men.

Pieter de Marees's Log | Published by Samuel Purchas

Now, I move to another location: the Gold Coast, or the coast stretching along present-day Ghana. Here, I examine changes from the beginning of the seventeenth century to the beginning of the eighteenth century: the stripping of nobility from dances attributed to the Gold Coast. Recall from the previous chapter, how dance masters related the embodiment of noble decorum to knowing the ideal human and, by extension, knowing how to govern. By a stripping of nobility, I am calling attention to the “fundamentally processual character of history,” in that Europeans did not always already approach all sub-Saharan Africans as categorically sub-human. Herman Bennett, for instance, insists on the importance of examining a “mutually constitutive nature of sovereign authority” between Europeans and Africans so as not to configure “a distorted geography of power.”⁶⁸⁰ By this, Bennett means to examine the presupposition of a European “monopoly over violence” and conquest.⁶⁸¹ European travelers, well into the eighteenth century, depended upon access—to territory, trade goods, natural resources, and enslaved persons—as granted to them by local African rulers and nobles. Europeans treated sub-Saharan hierarchies with more than just

⁶⁸⁰ Herman Bennett, “Soiled Gods: Disciplinary and the African-European Encounter in the Fifteenth Century,” (typescript, forthcoming) 4, 9.

⁶⁸¹ Herman Bennett, “Soiled Gods,” 1, 8.

nominal respect, and did not, at the beginning of the seventeenth century, write all sub-Saharan as bodies fit for enslavement.

Both Pieter de Marees and Willem Bosman were Dutch travelers, who visited the Gold Coast region. De Marees wrote at the beginning of the seventeenth century, while Bosman wrote at the very beginning of the eighteenth century. De Marees's version of a noble initiation ceremony passed through a variety of European travel narratives (detailed below), before Bosman's became the most widely read and sourced description of West Africa. In the multi-day ceremony, described extensively by de Marees and briefly by Bosman, a man ascends to the gentlemen or noble class. After this elaborate, multi-day ceremony, the newly-ennobled man can own enslaved laborers, and participate in the town or regional council.⁶⁸² Neither writer ascribes a specific location or people group for this ceremony, other than placing it within the Gold Coast. By examining the language of de Marees and Bosman in relation to Gold Coast nobility, we see how imagined Black dancing bodies became disqualified, in writing, from carrying and transmitting noble virtue and decorum. While both writers negate the humanity of Gold Coast Africans, Bosman categorically disarticulates Gold Coast Africans from qualifying as nobles, thereby utterly displacing them from carrying and transmitting decorum and virtue in their dancing.

The English translation of Pieter de Marees's writing on the Gold Coast appeared in Book 7 of *Purchas His Pilgrimes*, directly after the first extract from Jobson's journal. The original Dutch

⁶⁸² "A description and historical declaration of the golden Kingdome of Guinea, otherwise called the golden coast of Myna ..." in *Purchas His Pilgrimes: in five bookes: the first, contayning the voyages and peregrinations made by ancient kings ... and others, to and thorow ...*, ed., Samuel Purchas, Vol 2, Book 7, Chap 2, 926-970 (London: Printed by William Stansby for Henrie Fetherstone, 1625) 958-959.

version of de Marees's writing "was published in Amsterdam in 1602."⁶⁸³ Albert van Dantzig and Adam Jones surmise that Marees "himself probably supervised (or perhaps even undertook) the preparation of a French translation published in Amsterdam in 1605."⁶⁸⁴ The English version, as commissioned by Hakluyt and published by Purchas, came from the translations by "Gotthard Arthus of Dantzig" which "were published in Frankfurt am Main in 1603-4 by the de Bry brothers."⁶⁸⁵ De Marees was copied and used extensively "for much of the literature on the Gold Coast and Benin published in the following 150 years."⁶⁸⁶ Dantzig and Jones list the travelers and compilers who copied and borrowed from de Marees, including "[Michael] Hemmersam (1663), the anonymous author of *The Golden Coast* (1665), [Olfert] Dapper (1668), [Nicholas] Villault (1669), [Erasmus] Franciscus (1669), [Wilhelm] Müller (1673), and [Jean] Barbot (1732), as well as being frequently cited by [Pierre d'Avity] Davity (1637/43) and [Thomas] Astley (1745)."⁶⁸⁷

Some of these sources documented one location, for instance both Michael Hemmersam and the anonymous English writer of *The Golden Coast* focused on the Gold Coast region. Others, like Olfert Dapper, Pierre d'Avity, and Thomas Astley, compiled available documents from corporate records and printed publications, and covered multiple territories in Africa and Asia. Jean Barbot traveled and participated in slaving voyages to the western coast of Africa, and enlarged his

⁶⁸³ Albert van Dantzig and Adam Jones, "Introduction," in *Description and Historical Account of the Gold Kingdom of Guinea (1602)*, transl and ed., Albert van Dantzig and Adam Jones (xiii-xix) (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1987) xiii.

⁶⁸⁴ Dantzig and Jones, "Introduction," in *Description of Historical Account of the Gold Kingdom of Guinea (1602)*, xvii.

⁶⁸⁵ Dantzig and Jones, "Introduction," in *Description of Historical Account of the Gold Kingdom of Guinea (1602)*, xvii.

⁶⁸⁶ Dantzig and Jones, "Introduction," in *Description of Historical Account of the Gold Kingdom of Guinea (1602)*, xvii.

⁶⁸⁷ Dantzig and Jones, "Introduction," in *Description of Historical Account of the Gold Kingdom of Guinea (1602)*, xvii.

See also Elizabeth A. Sutton, *Early Modern Dutch Prints of Africa* (Farnham, Surrey: Ashgate Publishing, Ltd., 2010) 14-16.

work with other travelers' reports, companies' records, and local news sources.⁶⁸⁸ Many of these writers and compilers maintained contact with each other either directly or through publishers and agents.⁶⁸⁹ De Marees, then, stands as a primary and *written* source documenting the parameters of European knowledge about the Gold Coast region for over 150 years. It is not that de Marees represents the limits of continental European knowledge circulating in relation to the Gold coast, but that he reveals the initial parameters of writing about the Gold Coast and dancing. And later writers, by working within and altering these parameters, show how the written imaginary of Black dancing bodies changed in European circulation.

When writing about Gold Coast nobility, Pieter de Marees (in English translation) explains, "There are many Gentlemen in that Countrey," and many men "seeke much after it, and begin to gather some wealth from their youth upwards."⁶⁹⁰ In preparation for the feast and celebration to confirm their ascension to nobility, noble-initiates gather gifts to give to other nobles and to present to the town, in general. The young men of the town prepare themselves and their weapons, painting their bodies and faces with "red and yellow Earth, which makes them looke like a company of young devils."⁶⁹¹ The women prepare the main wife of the noble-initiate, with ornaments of gold, and a

⁶⁸⁸ "Introduction," in *Barbot on Guinea: The Writings of Jean Barbot on West Africa 1678-1712*, eds. PEH Hair, Adam Jones and Robin Law (London: The Hakluyt Society, 1992) xvi, xxii, xxvii-xviii, xxix-xxxix.

⁶⁸⁹ See, for example, John D. Fage, *A Guide to Original Sources for Precolonial Western Africa Published in European Languages: For the Most Part in Book Form* (Madison: University of Wisconsin-Madison, 1994) xii; <http://digicoll.library.wisc.edu/cgi-bin/AfricanStudies/AfricanStudies-idx?type=turn&entity=AfricanStudies.Fage01.p0018&id=AfricanStudies.Fage01&size=text>.

⁶⁹⁰ "A description and historical declaration of the golden Kingdome of Guinea ..." in *Purchas His Pilgrimes*, ed., Samuel Purchas, Vol 2, 958.

⁶⁹¹ "A description and historical declaration of the golden Kingdome of Guinea ..." in *Purchas His Pilgrimes*, ed., Samuel Purchas, Vol 2, 959.

ceremonial horse's tail.⁶⁹² The men and the women, all of the noble class, participate in a town-wide procession, all of them "dancing and leaping round about the Towne."⁶⁹³ De Marees describes the procession ending at the center of the town, "and there they make a great noise with Drummes and Pipes, and ... with fencing and leaping ... making, as they think great joy about the Gentleman; every man seeking to excel each other, and get the most praise and commendation."⁶⁹⁴ The women dance, as well, sometimes behind the men and sometimes "carrying both the Gentleman and his wife upon a stoole" in the procession and "casting white Meale in their faces."⁶⁹⁵ The celebrations can continue for up to three days in this manner.

From de Marees, imagined Black dancing bodies leap and engage in mock combat during a celebratory procession. He highlights class status, and creates a hierarchy, one recognizable to European readers, within Gold Coast towns. Unlike Jobson, de Marees includes leaping with both dancing and swordplay. Again, this does not necessarily mean Jobson did not witness or notice leaping, but he did not publish any written sources about airborne movement. The dances and dancers, as composed and imagined through de Marees's writing, also travel from one point to another, until they reach the town square for further athletic and dancing competitions. In other words, they dance and move with a purpose, or goal, as opposed to endless and addictive dancing.

⁶⁹² "A description and historical declaration of the golden Kingdome of Guinea ..." in *Purchas His Pilgrimes*, ed., Samuel Purchas, Vol 2, 959.

⁶⁹³ "A description and historical declaration of the golden Kingdome of Guinea ..." in *Purchas His Pilgrimes*, ed., Samuel Purchas, Vol 2, 959.

⁶⁹⁴ "A description and historical declaration of the golden Kingdome of Guinea ..." in *Purchas His Pilgrimes*, ed., Samuel Purchas, Vol 2, 959.

⁶⁹⁵ "A description and historical declaration of the golden Kingdome of Guinea ..." in *Purchas His Pilgrimes*, ed., Samuel Purchas, Vol 2, 959.

De Marees mentions leaping usually in relation to the men's dancing during the procession. In this version, it remains unclear if he also includes women in leaping, or if he means for readers to imagine the women mainly dancing on and over the ground, and throwing white flour onto the noble-initiate and his wife. De Marees relays what happened, like Jobson and Purchas, and Towerson and Hakluyt. He also serves as a source of that which is said to have happened. But, by categorizing Gold Coast Africans as noble, he fashions their imagined and Black dancing bodies as potential sources of virtue and decorum.

In the translation published by Purchas, de Marees notes some more ceremonies and festivals of the noble class, and then he explains how Gold Coast African women dance on a regular basis. He describes how they dress up with ornaments and fine clothes; "and commonly about evening [the women] assemble together, and goe to the Market-place to dance."⁶⁹⁶ Every night, de Marees indicates the women gather to dance in the town's central market, with fine clothes and gold ornaments. He notes a variety of instruments, for music and rhythms, used by the women, "each keeping good correspondence with their fellowes Instruments."⁶⁹⁷ Many of them bring instruments, and play them *with* each other, "keeping good correspondence" of music and rhythm. In addition, "Others sing and begin to dance two and two together, leaping and stamping with one of their feet upon the ground, knocking with their fingers and bowing downe their heads, and speaking to each other."⁶⁹⁸ While some women play, other women dance, two at a time or in partnered pairs. They

⁶⁹⁶ "A description and historical declaration of the golden Kingdome of Guinea ..." in *Purchas His Pilgrimes*, ed., Samuel Purchas, Vol 2, 959-960.

⁶⁹⁷ "A description and historical declaration of the golden Kingdome of Guinea ..." in *Purchas His Pilgrimes*, ed., Samuel Purchas, Vol 2, 959-960.

⁶⁹⁸ "A description and historical declaration of the golden Kingdome of Guinea ..." in *Purchas His Pilgrimes*, ed., Samuel Purchas, Vol 2, 959-960.

leap and stamp, while snapping or tapping with their fingers. They also bend or incline their heads towards one another and exchange spoken or chanted choruses. The women hold horse tails in their hands, “which they cast sometimes on the one shoulder, then upon the other, and each doing as the other doth.”⁶⁹⁹ And still “other women take straw, which they let fall on the ground, cast it up again in the aire with their feet and catch it as it falleth with their hands.”⁷⁰⁰ Along with the leaping and stamping, tapping and speaking, the women move horse tails and straw in rhythmic accompaniment to their steps, gestures, and the musical instruments.

De Marees includes a significant amount of detail for this evening dancing, which he says lasts for an hour or an hour and a half, before the women return home. Again, while de Marees writes this as a nightly occurrence, the women do not dance *all* night, to the exclusion of sleep and other work. In his composition, he invites his readers to imagine these women in complex formations. The women, as written and imagined Black dancing bodies, move through the air and use their feet to make emphatic impact with the ground. They work with horse tails and straw, around and on their shoulders and up into the air. They use their fingers to make rhythmic noises, and speak. All of these things they accomplish in relation to each other, in partnered pairs and “doing as the other doth.” De Marees composes these women as a coordinated group of imagined Black dancing bodies; they make music and rhythm and movements in concert. His depiction implies a kind or quality of danced order, as opposed to chaos. Then, he adds, “they play many apish

⁶⁹⁹ “A description and historical declaration of the golden Kingdome of Guinea ...” in *Purchas His Pilgrimes*, ed., Samuel Purchas, Vol 2, 959-960.

⁷⁰⁰ “A description and historical declaration of the golden Kingdome of Guinea ...” in *Purchas His Pilgrimes*, ed., Samuel Purchas, Vol 2, 959-960.

and childrens sports, thinking that they doe excellent well.”⁷⁰¹ In other words, de Marees wants his readers to comprehend his preceding composition as knowledge equivalent to “apish and childrens sports,” not danced knowledge of the ideal human. By invoking apes after he describes the women as leaping, stamping, and bowing heads down, de Marees relates the women’s dancing to the bent-over postures of primates. He brings in apes to emphasize how Gold Coast African women physically evidence their low rank among “degrees of humanity,” and in contrast to the ideal human.

De Marees repeats this assessment of apishness when describing another festival, in honor of the anniversary of a king’s coronation. On this day, the king makes a great feast for his people and neighboring rulers. The king also makes a sacrifice to his central god, or fetish, which lived in “the highest tree in the Towne.”⁷⁰² During the celebrations, the people “use manie Apish Toyes, as Fencing, Drumming, singing and leaping, the women are also very merrie and dance.”⁷⁰³ Even as de Marees includes specificity of danced movement and rhythms, including fencing, leaping, and modes of combat, he relates these activities as closer to apes rather than the ideal human. De Marees, however, remains unclear in his use of apishness. He does not relate the noble-initiate ceremony as closer to ape-like or child-like games. He only deploys apishness when describing a general dancing practice, such as the nightly dancing of women or when the people all celebrate their king’s coronation day. Because he takes so much space to describe the noble-initiate ceremony, de Marees implies a distinction between noble and common dance practices in the Gold Coast. This distinction

⁷⁰¹ “A description and historical declaration of the golden Kingdome of Guinea ...” in *Purchas His Pilgrimes*, ed., Samuel Purchas, Vol 2, 960.

⁷⁰² “A description and historical declaration of the golden Kingdome of Guinea ...” in *Purchas His Pilgrimes*, ed., Samuel Purchas, Vol 2, 949.

⁷⁰³ “A description and historical declaration of the golden Kingdome of Guinea ...” in *Purchas His Pilgrimes*, ed., Samuel Purchas, Vol 2, 949.

draws on ideas of social class, a ranking of “degrees of humanity,” with which his European readers would be familiar.

He further mentions, in two instances, how the Gold Coast Africans became ashamed of their spirit-worship and dancing. In response to thunder and lightning, he writes of how “some Fishermen, or other Moores,” believe the hills have gods or spirits, who sent bad weather to punish them.⁷⁰⁴ The residents then leave meat and drink to appease the spirits, and to avoid further harm or injury by bad weather. De Marees comments how “the Netherlanders” then “laughed and jested at” the Gold Coast Africans, such that they “were ashamed and durst make no more Fetissos in our presence, but were ashamed of their own apishness.”⁷⁰⁵ De Marees also highlights shame in relation to the women’s dancing, in that, “they desire not to be seene by strangers, because they laugh and jest at them, and then they are ashamed.”⁷⁰⁶ Even though de Marees configures Gold Coast Africans (though not necessarily their nobles) more closely to apes than to humans, he grants them the ability to feel or to become ashamed, when mocked by European spectators. Europeans, again, serve as a civilizing and humanizing presence.

As Jennifer Morgan reminds us, Europeans in this time period considered shame as a significant component of civilized decorum. Throughout his writing, de Marees consistently comments on the lack of clothing, and a related lack of shame towards nakedness, in Gold Coast

⁷⁰⁴ “A description and historical declaration of the golden Kingdome of Guinea ...” in *Purchas His Pilgrimes*, ed., Samuel Purchas, Vol 2, 943.

⁷⁰⁵ “A description and historical declaration of the golden Kingdome of Guinea ...” in *Purchas His Pilgrimes*, ed., Samuel Purchas, Vol 2, 943; for etymology of fetisso from Portuguese, see William Pietz, “The Problem of Fetish I,” in *RES: Anthropology and Aesthetics* No. 9 (Spring 1985): 5 (5-17).

⁷⁰⁶ “A description and historical declaration of the golden Kingdome of Guinea ...” in *Purchas His Pilgrimes*, ed., Samuel Purchas, Vol 2, 960.

African communities. In this respect, de Marees reprimands mothers along the Gold Coast, for failing to cover or keep their own bodies hidden during and after birth. De Marees writes, “when she is in labour, both men, women, maids, yong men & children, run unto her, and she in most shamelesse manner, is delivered before them all.”⁷⁰⁷ Even after the birth, a new mother “goes to the water to wash ... not once dreaming of a moneths lying in.”⁷⁰⁸ Instead, “The next day after, they goe abroad in the streets, to doe their business, as other women doe.”⁷⁰⁹ Birth and the months after, according to de Marees and his European readers, should be a private and hidden time. The public display of a new mother’s body defies civilized decorum of hiding a woman’s reproductive body during delivery and directly afterwards. The “absence of shame” in publicly giving birth “reflected the breakdown of natural laws.”⁷¹⁰

Moreover, this absence of shame in public displays of nakedness carried over into parenting and rearing children. De Marees further castigates the parents for “suffering both Boyes and Girles to goe stark naked as they were borne, with their private members all open.”⁷¹¹ According to de Marees, the parents fail, “not once teaching [the children] any civilitie, nor showing them what they

⁷⁰⁷ “A description and historical declaration of the golden Kingdome of Guinea ...” in *Purchas His Pilgrimes*, ed., Samuel Purchas, Vol 2, 930.

⁷⁰⁸ “A description and historical declaration of the golden Kingdome of Guinea ...” in *Purchas His Pilgrimes*, ed., Samuel Purchas, Vol 2, 930.

⁷⁰⁹ “A description and historical declaration of the golden Kingdome of Guinea ...” in *Purchas His Pilgrimes*, ed., Samuel Purchas, Vol 2, 930.

⁷¹⁰ Morgan, *Laboring Women*, 16-17.

⁷¹¹ “A description and historical declaration of the golden Kingdome of Guinea ...” in *Purchas His Pilgrimes*, ed., Samuel Purchas, Vol 2, 931.

should do,” to cover their bodies properly.⁷¹² Morgan observes, “Women’s savagery does not stand apart. Rather it indicts the whole: all Africans were savage.”⁷¹³ The savage and uncivilized nakedness of new mothers reverberates out to the uncivilized children, and the general lack of public shame over nakedness throughout the Gold Coast. De Marees thus positions these African women as imagined Black bodies, who are unashamed in public nakedness to the extent that they willingly give birth before numerous people. They do not lie-in for several months to hide their reproductive bodies. Nor do they then teach their children to be civilized and cover their bodies, thus perpetuating savagery and indecorous displays of unclothed bodies.

In fact, the only way these women, and Gold Coast Africans in general, learn shame is through contact with European travelers. De Marees notes, for instance, that Gold Coast residents close to the coast, with more extended interactions and exchanges with Europeans became “more shamefac’t” and wore clothes. Additionally, when Europeans laughed at the religious practices or public dancing they saw along the Gold Coast, the resident Africans learned to hide these practices. Overall, then, despite de Marees including leaping and mock combat for Gold Coast nobles, as well as extensive descriptions of the rhythms and movements in women’s dancing, he fashions Gold Coast Africans as uncivilized and imagined Black bodies, often in close relation to apes and ignorant children. Like Towerson’s emphasis on hanging breasts and Jobson’s on large male sexual organs, de Marees’s emphasis on apishness composes imagined Black bodies in savage, barbarous relief.

European spectators, for both Jobson and de Marees, function explicitly as a civilizing or humanizing presence. The implications for European readers being, without European presence, Gold Coast Africans will continue to worship their false gods, dance their public and indecorous

⁷¹² “A description and historical declaration of the golden Kingdome of Guinea ...” in *Purchas His Pilgrimes*, ed., Samuel Purchas, Vol 2, 931.

⁷¹³ Morgan, *Laboring Women*, 30.

dances, remain naked without shame, and give birth in front of many people without shame. Gold Coast Africans, especially women and children, need European presence to bring and enforce civilized knowledge of the ideal human to *fundamentally change* how they dress, give birth, and dance, in everyday life. Thus, most Gold Coast Africans, with the possible exception of their nobles, fail to qualify as imagined Black bodies bringing forth danced knowledge of the ideal human. Most of the Gold Coast African women also fail to qualify as everyday knowledge of ideal human behavior. By mentioning and centering a lack of shame, in birth, worship, and dance, de Marees negates and silences the humanity of these women. Their bodies are not qualified carriers of knowledge for the future; they are qualified only as requiring to learn and acquire knowledge of the ideal human from European decorum.

Willem Bosman's Book

By the end of the seventeenth century, de Marees's writing had been copied and translated and borrowed into successive published work about Africa (as noted above). Willem Bosman's work, in particular, would become "the authoritative account of black Africa for eighteenth-century Europe."⁷¹⁴ Bosman, a merchant with the Dutch West India Company, served for nearly fourteen years in the Gold and Slave coastal regions. The Slave Coast lay east of the Gold coast, and included what is now known as Togo, Benin and Nigeria. Bosman moved up company ranks quickly and, "by 1698 he had become the Chief Merchant ... second in authority only to the Director-General of the Guinea Coast." But, "his brutal superior was ousted by the company in 1701, Bosman was swept out

⁷¹⁴ Pietz, "The Problem of the Fetish, IIIa: Bosman's Guinea and the Enlightenment Theory of Fetishism," in RES: Anthropology and Aesthetics 16 (Autumn 1988): 116 (105-124).

with him, and, at twenty-nine, found himself back in Holland, his career at an end.”⁷¹⁵ His book, which he “addressed specifically to the board of director of the Dutch West India Company,” subsequently “displaced earlier authorities on the Gold and Slave coast of Guinea.”⁷¹⁶ Translations and expanded editions quickly followed the initial Dutch publication in 1702. French, English, and German translations of his work appeared in less than a decade after the original publication, while updated and new expanded editions followed with some regularity, for the following thirty years.⁷¹⁷

Bosman divided the publication into letters, with each letter focusing on a specific set of themes or observations. He begins with several letters about regions along the Gold Coast. In Letter IX, he addresses the Gold Coast nobility and their ceremonies, which de Marees first described nearly a century earlier. Bosman writes, “To begin. The Negroes are all without exception, Crafty, Villanous, and Fraudulent, and very seldom to be trusted.”⁷¹⁸ He further claims inherent laziness and slothfulness, “that nothing but the utmost Necessity can force them to labor.”⁷¹⁹ Furthermore, according to Bosman, Gold Coast Africans “are so incredibly careless and stupid, and are so little concerned at their Misfortunes, that ’tis hardly to be observed by any change in them whether they have met with any good or ill Success.”⁷²⁰ For instance, he remarks, “when they have obtained a Victory over their Enemies they return Home diverting themselves with leaping and dancing.”⁷²¹

⁷¹⁵ Pietz, “The Problem of the Fetish, IIIa,” 116.

⁷¹⁶ Pietz, “The Problem of the Fetish, IIIa,” 116.

⁷¹⁷ Pietz, “The Problem of the Fetish, IIIa,” 116.

⁷¹⁸ Bosman, *A New Description of the Coast of Guinea: Divided into the Gold, the Slave, and the Ivory Coast*, (New York: Barnes and Noble, Inc., 1967) 117.

⁷¹⁹ Bosman, *A New Description of the Coast of Guinea*, 117.

⁷²⁰ Bosman, *A New Description of the Coast of Guinea*, 117.

⁷²¹ Bosman, *A New Description of the Coast of Guinea*, 117.

Bosman continues, even if they lost the battle, “they yet Feast and are Merry, and Dance.”⁷²²

Bosman indicts Gold Coast Africans on several counts, including a natural inclination to defraud and cheat others, an unwillingness to work, and an inability to distinguish between victory and defeat.

Towards this last point, Bosman derides the celebrations and festivities which take place after a battle. Not only do Gold Coast Africans leap and dance, while feasting, after they win; they also do so after they lose. Bosman appears to disapprove of both instances as indecorous, but he appears particularly distressed by the similar dances and feasts held after a loss. With his initial depiction of Gold Coast Africans, Bosman composes imagined Black dancing bodies engaged in constant frivolity and play. Put differently, Bosman disqualifies Gold Coast Africans, as imagined Black dancing bodies, from knowledge of how the ideal human should respond to military victories and losses.

A few pages into this letter, Bosman introduces the nobles and the feasts, about which de Marees wrote, and subsequent travelers and compilers copied. He starts, “I remember ... a certain Author tending to a Description of several Noble families.”⁷²³ By “a certain Author,” he most likely means Olfert Dapper, whose work on Africa was published in 1668. Bosman differentiates his writing from Dapper’s, “but in all the time of my Residence here, I have not been able to discover what sort of People these were who put any value upon the Nobility of Families.”⁷²⁴ Albert van Dantzig analyzed the English translation of the Dutch original, and came up with a more derisive

⁷²² Bosman, *A New Description of the Coast of Guinea*, 117.

⁷²³ Bosman, *A New Description of the Coast of Guinea*, 132.

⁷²⁴ Bosman, *A New Description of the Coast of Guinea*, 132.

version of this statement. “But in all the time I have been here, I have not yet been able to discover what kind of Negroes or what rank should be considered [Noble].”⁷²⁵

Bosman explains he will take time to show the different ranks, or classes, of Gold Coast Africans, and “the Result is, only the Richest Man is the most honoured, without the least regard to Nobility.”⁷²⁶ Van Dantzig’s translation provides a similarly caustic evaluation of Gold Coast nobility by Bosman: “that the one who possesses the greatest Riches receives also the greatest Honour without Nobility being mixed in it to the least.”⁷²⁷ Bosman takes care to differentiate between wealth and nobility. Having riches and prosperity does not automatically endow a person with noble virtues. Bosman invites his European readers to read noble or nobility as *ignoble* or *indecorous*, when applied to Gold Coast Africans. Just because he will use the word noble to describe the higher ranks, Bosman does not want his readers to automatically grant virtue and decorum to rulers along the Gold Coast.

When Bosman reaches the ceremony to acquire noble rank, he devotes very little space to the festivities, in comparison to de Marees. He describes the celebration “as publick and pompous.”⁷²⁸ On the first night, the noble-initiate “is obliged to lie ... with all his Family in Battle Array in the open air,” to show his willingness to fight with courage and bravery, “in Defence of his People.”⁷²⁹ For the next eight days after, the celebrations encompass “Shooting and Martial-Exercises, as well as Dancing and all forms of Mirth.”⁷³⁰ While de Marees’s version describes the

⁷²⁵ Van Dantzig, “English Bosman and Dutch Bosman ... II,” in *History in Africa* 3 (1976): 118

⁷²⁶ Bosman, *A New Description of the Coast of Guinea*, 132.

⁷²⁷ Van Dantzig, “English Bosman and Dutch Bosman ... II,” in *History in Africa*, 118.

⁷²⁸ Bosman, *A New Description of the Coast of Guinea*, 136.

⁷²⁹ Bosman, *A New Description of the Coast of Guinea*, 136

⁷³⁰ Bosman, *A New Description of the Coast of Guinea*, 136.

young men of the town engaging in fencing and mock combat, and the young women dancing, Bosman's version is less clear. At the least, since Bosman mentions the new noblemen with his family, wives, and slaves, his version might imply that the newly ennobled house celebrates in this manner. Since Bosman lived in the Gold Coast at the end of the seventeenth century, and wrote at the beginning of the eighteenth, the mock combat displays feature firearms instead of swords. While he does not elaborate on the danced movements or rhythms, here, Bosman earlier mentioned leaping and dancing in relation to the armed men accompanying a king's royal entrance.⁷³¹ In three instances in this letter, then, Bosman depicts Gold Coast Africans engaged in military or royal processions. In two of the three instances, leaping accompanies dancing to celebrate or indicate the arrival of royalty, composing imagined Black bodies through the air and over the ground.

After briefly describing the initiation ceremony, Bosman goes on to strip Gold Coast Africans of the ability to become truly noble and virtuous. He writes, "These are the Nobility which Authors boast of on this Coast; but that in reality they are not so is plain."⁷³² Bosman alerts his readers that he will now explain what he meant, earlier, by questioning the use of the word noble for Gold Coast Africans. He asserts, "no Person can Ennoble himself, but must be so by Birth, or by Creation of another."⁷³³ Gold Coast Africans cannot aspire to this, "for by Birth they are only Slaves."⁷³⁴ Bosman claims that Gold Coast Africans are neither born into nobility, nor do they have an aristocratic class capable of raising them into nobility. All of them, even those who style themselves as kings are only fit to be slaves, nothing more and nothing less, no matter how much

⁷³¹ Bosman, *A New Description of the Coast of Guinea*, 126-127; see also van Dantzig, "English Bosman and Dutch Bosman ... II," in *History in Africa*, 116.

⁷³² Bosman, *A New Description of the Coast of Guinea*, 137.

⁷³³ Bosman, *A New Description of the Coast of Guinea*, 137.

⁷³⁴ Bosman, *A New Description of the Coast of Guinea*, 137.

money they acquire. That is, their bodies do not carry nobility from birth, nor can they bestow or acquire noble virtue and decorum. They are qualified as slaves, and fit to rule slaves. Even though Bosman has composed Gold Coast Africans in leaping and mock combat, he disqualifies and negates these movements as knowledge of the ideal human.

Moreover, “they owe their advance only to themselves and their Money; their Port of Honour here being always open to him who is rich enough to bear the Expense.”⁷³⁵ Bosman elaborates further how, “in other Places Nobility engages those honoured with it firmly in the publick Service of their King or Country.”⁷³⁶ In contrast, along the Gold Coast, their nobles “are not the least concerned for” service to king or country.⁷³⁷ Instead, they focus on “applying themselves to nothing but Trade.”⁷³⁸ Gold Coast Africans do not serve as proper nobles do, in service to a monarch or their own country. They aspire only to acquire riches through trade, which does not garner them the virtuous right to rule as a true noble, that is as the true nobles from Europe. Bosman dismisses their nobility as a true equivalent to European standards of virtue and decorum, substantiating this with his own use of a noble Gold Coast African as a servant. He comments, “I have for several Years successively been waited on by one of these Noblemen in the capacity of a Footman, without having the least respect to his Nobility.”⁷³⁹ If Gold Coast Africans were true nobles, then a true noble would not wait upon a Dutch merchant as a lowly footman.

Bosman’s adaptation of de Marees, and of the subsequent versions coming from and related to de Marees, further negates and displaces Gold Coast Africans from carrying danced knowledge

⁷³⁵ Bosman, *A New Description of the Coast of Guinea*, 137.

⁷³⁶ Bosman, *A New Description of the Coast of Guinea*, 137.

⁷³⁷ Bosman, *A New Description of the Coast of Guinea*, 137.

⁷³⁸ Bosman, *A New Description of the Coast of Guinea*, 137.

⁷³⁹ Bosman, *A New Description of the Coast of Guinea*, 137.

worthy of recording and passing down through writing. For Bosman, all Gold Coast Africans qualify as imagined Black bodies fit only for enslavement. Recall that by the time Bosman is writing, we have the first written historical narrative of ballet from Claude-François Ménéstrier. Historical knowledge of aristocratic and court decorum, through dance, stands as the legitimated and legitimating standard of which dances, and which dancing bodies, qualify for inclusion in official narratives. By displacing Gold Coast Africans from qualifying as nobility, by negating the very use of the word *noble* in relation to Gold Coast Africans, Bosman forges a historiographic kinship between imagined Black dancing bodies and enslavement. For Bosman, Gold Coast Africans, and indeed, *all* West Africans throughout his lengthy publication, qualify solely as imagined and enslaved Black bodies. As imagined and enslaved Black bodies, West Africans carry indecorous and ignoble embodied knowledges. If ballet stands as what happened in history, and the decorous and virtuous ballet dancing body stands as a source for that which is said to have happened in dance, at this time, then West Africans may carry and transmit knowledge of leaping and mock combat. But their movements do not qualify as dance, nor do their bodies qualify as sources through which knowledge of dance passes.

In further contrast to those who wrote before him, Bosman does not include either extensive or passing descriptions of the physical appearance of Gold Coast Africans. In Bosman's writing, not only is noble decorum utterly eliminated and removed from imagined Black dancing bodies, the very bodies themselves remain subsumed within, or consumed by, Bosman's derisive descriptions. This lack of writing implies, on the one hand, a pre-existing imagined Black body. That is, his European readers would know, from a century of accumulated travel publications, how to imagine Black bodies in close relation to beasts and the ground. This lack of writing implies, on the other hand, an acceleration of displacing imagined Black bodies from serving as sources of knowledge about human movement. To be clear, Bosman chose not to include physical descriptions

of Gold Coast Africans' bodies, other than equating them to slaves. If their bodies fail completely, per Bosman, to carry and transmit knowledge of noble virtue and decorum; and if their bodies can only carry knowledge of enslavement; and if their bodies thus do not qualify to be written down or described; then, it follows, that the enslaved body belongs as an *unwritten* and *disappeared* source of knowledge, animated between the European writer (here, Bosman and those before him) and the readers (European investors and publics).

Gold Coast Africans, in Bosman's work, pass entirely into an imaginary domain of Black bodies forged by European spectators. This imaginary domain, a de-physicalized and de-territorialized realm where African bodies do not *live* as human, involves the European writers and readers who came before, the European writers and readers in Bosman's present, and the European readers yet to come. Put differently, by equating all Gold Coast Africans as qualified only for enslavement, Bosman exerts the imaginative power to forge Black bodies as always already conquered non-humans. By stripping Gold Coast Africans of nobility, and presuming a readership capable of bringing previously accumulated knowledge of inherent bestiality and savagery to bear on his written descriptions, Bosman deploys imagined Black bodies as always already silenced from serving as sources of embodied knowledge worthy of being written down, preserved, and narrated for future generations. Bosman does not re-center himself, the European man, as a source of what happened and that which is said to have happened, so much as he writes himself as the only *human* source present, capable of writing, and worthy of being written about, in generations to come.

Creating a Source, Creating a Fact

I have elaborated at length about how each of these European men, as writers and editors, disqualified Africans as human bodies and thus, embodied sources of knowledge of human

movement. Recall that, in thinking with Trouillot, the moment of creating sources doubles as a moment of creating facts. Qualifying written sources for inclusion in archives legitimates the facts carried by and through the writing. When Towerson composed West African women as imagined and savage bodies, he also generated a fact: Black female bodies with West African heritages are savages. When Jobson and Purchas mentioned, or elaborated, on how Mandinka people were addicted to music and dancing, they created a fact: Black bodies have an unusual affinity for music and dancing. When Jobson and Purchas emphasized the bestial appearance of Mandinka men's penises, they produced a fact: Black male bodies have large sexual organs, and are a clear and present danger to Black female bodies. The complementary fact to this, then, was: Black female bodies need rescue by European male bodies. De Marees allowed for Gold Coast nobility, thereby introducing the fact: Black bodies can hold noble virtue and decorum. De Marees also created another, more generalized fact: Black bodies resemble apes and ignorant children in their dancing, mock combat, and other celebratory activities.

All of these men formed and related imagined Black bodies to the ground. Jobson and Purchas did so explicitly with imagery of bent and crooked women's bodies, and large penises hanging down. Towerson and de Marees accomplished this through their deployment of bestial imagery, of goats and hanging breasts and apes. Read together, these men's writing created and perpetuated this fact: Black bodies are inexorably and indecorously drawn down towards the earth. Even Towerson and de Marees, who composed imagined Black bodies with the capability of dancing and leaping through the air, wielded bestial and savage imagery in sharply indecorous, savage relief. By forging historiographic kinships between imagined Black bodies, and beasts of the earth, these writers deployed "degrees of humanity" to create this fact: West Africans, as imagined Black bodies, do not qualify as human. Taken together, then, the *invented* and *factual* parameters for writing of Africans *became*: imagined Black bodies move crookedly over the ground, with their naked

sexual organs pulling indecorously downwards, just like their living kin, the beasts of the earth. Performances executed by these indecorous and imagined Black bodies likewise became danced knowledge of bestial savagery. That is, the performed movements and rhythms by West African brought forth a chaos indicative of the general savage conditions of their lives, requiring both corrective and civilizing European presence, in dance and conquest.

Bosman both inherited and shifted strategies of the writers and travelers who came before him. He removed physical descriptions of imagined Black bodies from his writing, and removed the capability for any Africans to embody noble virtue and decorum. He overwrote de Marees's allowed fact of Gold Coast nobility, as well as Jobson's and Towerson's lengthy negotiations with resident West African rulers, emphasizing instead the always already attendant lack of humanity in imagined Black bodies from West Africa. He generated an overarching fact: Black bodies qualify as presumptively non-human and enslaved. As such, not only do imagined Black bodies factually represent evidence of bestial savagery in need of civilizing conquest, imagined Black bodies also *factually* represent an *inborn* lack of knowledge of humanity. Recall, again, that embodied knowledge relates to embodied memory. To hold knowledge in the body, to carry and transmit it, means also to carry and relay memory from one body to another. To acquire knowledge from another body, to imitate and learn movement or behaviors, means to gain and create *shared* embodied memories. If, in writing, imagined Black bodies qualify as inhuman knowledge, which is another way to say imagined Black bodies represent utter *ignorance* of humanity, then European presence brings civilization and *humanity* to Black bodies.

Bosman, in effect, fashions imagined Black bodies through such a completely enslaved and non-human imaginary so as to inspire his readers to conclude: *imagined Black bodies have no shared memories of how to be human except that which we, the ideal and European humans, would give to them*. And if imagined Black bodies have no shared memories, or carry no knowledge, of how to be human, then

they – and their dances – have no history. Put differently, the pervasive and persistent silencing of West African humanity, seen here through strategies of negation, displacement, and corrective conquest in descriptions of dancing and dancing bodies, concurrently silence and makes absent the capability for West Africans to have history. Because if their bodies have no humanity, if they carry no knowledge of the ideal human capable and worthy of being recorded, transmitted, and preserved, they have no history to claim, preserve, or narrate.

SILENCES DENIED

Bosman's version of *what happened* in West Africa has one other significant difference from his predecessors: he includes no instances of being excluded or prohibited from accessing West African rituals, behaviors, or everyday life. I turn here to moments of prohibited access, in order to elaborate on the limits of the *facts* created and perpetuated by successive versions of European knowledge on West African people groups and societies. Because if I left the dissertation without this section, if I left us with Bosman dictating who does and who does not qualify as human, and therefore dictating who does and who does not have history, then I would also leave a tightly-constructed narrative of European male coercion, as evidenced through their strategies of writing and fashioning imagined Black dancing bodies. But part of the point of this dissertation, is that writing does not, after all, fully determine and foreclose lived and embodied experiences. I have spent pages and pages explaining how dancing bodies became evidence of humanity and non-humanity, in order to focus our attention on how written sources both invite and prevent us from imagining what happened. Part of the reason written sources, which move into archives and then into narratives, hold such power over how we understand what happened, is because they describe how people moved and

interacted with each other in everyday life. We access the past, we access what happened, because of the bodies evoked and composed in writing, for us to read and comprehend as *those who caused* events to happen.

Each of the early written sources, Towerson and Hakluyt, Jobson and Purchas, and de Marees, notes moments where European men were incapable of serving as sources of what happened, of relaying that which is said to have happened, because West Africans diverted or prohibited European presence and gaze. De Marees highlighted the women becoming ashamed of their dancing, and Gold Coast Africans in general becoming ashamed of their spirit worship. In both cases, the women and the Gold Coast Africans in general chose to hide away their practices at which Europeans laughed. I am calling these silences denied, or forced silences, because the silences emanate from West African physical prevention, rather than European physical access and subsequent narration. For most of the duration of these travel writings, Europe men are and have been the ones writing and preserving their logs, journals, and printed publications.

These silences denied draw our attention to the bodies imagined and composed from within written sources, highlighting the evidentiary limits of European knowledge on West African life. By analyzing when Europeans write of being blocked or prohibited or diverted, we approach the limits of the parameters within which European sources can compose or imagine Black bodies. In elaborating on these silences as denied, that is forced upon and perhaps through the written words of European writers and editors, I am emphasizing where and how European knowledge or facts cannot take us in this exploration of history as what happened and that which is said to have happened. I am further emphasizing the breadth of lived West African experience beyond the scope of European-written sources and European-invented facts in this time period. I elaborate on the silences denied within Jobson's and Towerson's written sources, and in reverse chronological order.

In their first extract, printed in Book 7 of *Pilgrimes*, Jobson and Purchas include descriptions of the circumcision celebration. On the main night of the cutting ritual, Jobson complains, “About two furlongs from their houses under a great tree were many fires, and much drumming with great noyse: here they said were those which were cut, but would not suffer mee to goe see.”⁷⁴⁰ By reading this after the women and men dancing, we understand that Jobson and Purchas included the performance that Jobson and his men were *allowed* to see. Jobson further complains, “The roaring, shouting, and dancing continued all night.”⁷⁴¹ So, it is not that every single night the Mandinka people gather to dance and sing continuously. In this one instance, the circumcision rite, the women and men dance all night in celebration as the cutting of initiates takes place. In this one instance, as well, Jobson and his men are confined to witness the dancing in particular locations. According to this version, the morning after the rite, the local Mandinka allow Jobson and his men to witness the cutting of their translator and guide, Samgully. But they prevent the European surgeon from tending to the boy’s wound. Not only did Jobson and Purchas choose to print information focused on grounded or earthbound dancing, they chose to print the exclusion of Europeans from “the roaring, shouting, and dancing” which happened around the ritual cutting. Jobson and Purchas cannot serve as sources of what happened under the great tree, nor can they serve as that which is said to have happened. They can only serve as a source of how they endured “the roaring, shouting and dancing,” and how Samgully underwent the ritual cutting on the following morning.

In the standalone version, *The Golden Trade*, Jobson gives more details about the ritual cutting of his local guide, Samgully, and of how the Mandinka elders prohibited European access after the ceremony. Jobson expects a priest to appear, but instead he observes “an ordinary man, with a short

⁷⁴⁰ “A true Relation of Master Richard Jobsons Voyage ...” in *Purchas His Pilgrimes*, Vol 2, 925.

⁷⁴¹ “A true Relation of Master Richard Jobsons Voyage ...” in *Purchas His Pilgrimes*, Vol 2, 925.

knife in his hand, which he whetted as he came, like one of our butchers unto a beast.”⁷⁴² To Jobson, the Mandinka man about to perform the cutting appears unqualified to cut a male foreskin, and rather appears qualified to butcher dead animals. In this instance, then, Jobson distinguishes male anatomy, at least that of Samgully, from that of animals. He continues noting his rising discomfort with the ceremony, explaining “the executioner taking hold of [Samgully’s] members, drawing the skinne over very far, as we conceived, cut him largely.”⁷⁴³ Jobson compares the ritual cutter to an executioner, and feels the man cut too much of Samgully’s foreskin with the knife.

According to Jobson, his men also find the ritual cutting to be excessive and dangerous. Even though “the maister of the town ... told us, hee had very seldome seen any abide it with so great a courage,” that is, Samgully bore the cut with great courage, the Europeans appear appalled. Jobson elaborates, “to our thinking it was exceeding fearful and full of terror.”⁷⁴⁴ Jobson then “told the doer in a very angry manner he had utterly spoyled [Samgully].”⁷⁴⁵ The ritual cutter asks Jobson why he thinks so, and Jobson explains the foreskin was cut too deeply. Jobson then relays, “His answere was, it is so much the better for [Samgully]” and then showed his own circumcised penis to Jobson and his men as evidence of the cutting.⁷⁴⁶ Jobson refuses to show any approval, “my distaste was such upon him, that I could not yeeld to give him any thing in the way of gratitude.”⁷⁴⁷ Even at the sight of the ritual cutter’s own experience, that the one wielding the knife had once been under the knife himself, Jobson persists in his anger on behalf of Samgully’s cut foreskin.

⁷⁴² *The Golden Trade in Discovery of River Gambra* (1623), 156.

⁷⁴³ *The Golden Trade in Discovery of River Gambra* (1623), 156.

⁷⁴⁴ *The Golden Trade in Discovery of River Gambra* (1623), 156.

⁷⁴⁵ *The Golden Trade in Discovery of River Gambra* (1623), 156.

⁷⁴⁶ *The Golden Trade in Discovery of River Gambra* (1623), 156.

⁷⁴⁷ *The Golden Trade in Discovery of River Gambra* (1623), 156.

Per Jobson, the Mandinka appear unmoved by the Europeans' distaste for their ceremony, and remove Samgully to heal with the rest of the initiates. Jobson describes his determination to help Samgully; he and his men complain to the residents, find allies, and they start to lead the Europeans to find the initiates. But, very quickly, "overtooke us four ancient men, who did not onely stay our going, but made shew of much displeasure to such as were going with us."⁷⁴⁸ The Mandinka elders intervene, preventing the Europeans from accessing the healing process, and leveling their approbation at community members who were leading Europeans to the initiates. Jobson and his men insist, "we desired we might have the boy away with us telling them wee had better meanes to cure him."⁷⁴⁹ They try to negotiate with the elders to grant access, on the basis of their medical knowledge, "shewing our Chirurgion unto them, who they knew had healed wounds and sores amongst them; but wee could not prevaile."⁷⁵⁰ The local Mandinka who had been guiding the European men to the initiates left, under the disapproval of the elders, and the Europeans left alone, chose to return to their ship without Samgully.

In this version, Jobson takes deep offense to the cutting of Samgully's foreskin. He portrays the Mandinka assigned to undertake the cutting as a butcher or executioner, implying a blunt excess, or hack job, in the technique of removing the foreskin. Then, when Jobson fears too much of Samgully's foreskin had been removed, he describes himself as intervening on behalf of Samgully. He refuses to abate in his criticism, even when he writes of the Mandinka man showing him evidence of his own healed and circumcised penis. When the Mandinka move Samgully to heal with the other initiates, Jobson attempts to wield European medicinal knowledge as leverage to gain access to Samgully. According to Jobson, some of the Mandinka believe him and the Europeans,

⁷⁴⁸ *The Golden Trade in Discovery of River Gambia* (1623), 156.

⁷⁴⁹ *The Golden Trade in Discovery of River Gambia* (1623), 156.

⁷⁵⁰ *The Golden Trade in Discovery of River Gambia* (1623), 156.

and start to take them back. But the Mandinka elders step in, to restore order. In this composition of the ritual cutting and events to follow, Jobson and his men come off as concerned for Samgully's overall health. The Mandinka elders appear as obstacles, preventing Jobson and the Europeans and their Mandinka allies from giving help to Samgully. From Jobson's writing, it's clear he thinks the Mandinka are abandoning Samgully to a potentially dire fate, by foregoing European medicinal assistance. Once again, Mandinka men stand as a clear and present danger, this time to the young men of their people. The elders, in particular, come off as intractable savages, refusing proper medical care. Samgully also remains silent in this version, allowing Jobson to compose the European men as speaking for and advocating for Samgully to the Mandinka men.

Because of the elders' actions, however, Jobson and his men cannot serve as sources to what happened after the ritual cutting. Nor can they, in turn, serve as sources for that which is said to have happened. The Mandinka elders physically prevent the Europeans from witnessing and interfering with the healing process after the ritual cutting. Jobson cannot create or invent any facts about the medicinal procedures of the Mandinka for penises with newly-removed foreskins. Jobson and the European men remain incapable of standing in for, advocating for, or writing on behalf of Samgully or the other initiates. Due to Jobson's description of offering medical assistance, he depicts the Europeans as a humanizing and civilizing presence, in the form of proper medical attention. He turns this forced or reversed silence, one in which his access remains barred, into a European presence of civilizing and medicinal care. He also uses this silence to portray divisions among the Mandinka. Some of the Mandinka, according to Jobson, wanted to help the Europeans find Samgully. While Jobson does not describe them, he does write of the elders as ancient men. From emphasizing the age of the elders, Jobson implies that younger Mandinka are those escorting the Europeans back to the initiates. Jobson thus turns this silence denied to compose some Mandinka as welcoming European civilization.

Turning to Towerson's writing, the West African women do not remain entirely subsumed within and consumed by his gaze. He writes down an approximation of their lyrics ("Sakere sakere, ho ho") in their local dialect. While this affirms him as a source of that which is said to have happened, this choice also makes visible, and audible, words attributed to African dialects for readers in Europe. RF Thompson analyzes Towerson's writing as one of the first sources on African call-and-response formations of singing and dancing. He comments, "those who have worked in Africa know with what inexorable penetration the refrains to call-and-response singing can sometimes lodge themselves in our consciousness."⁷⁵¹ For RF Thompson, the power of "overlapping African antiphony" manifests in Towerson's writing. That is, despite the fact Towerson did not speak the language or understand the song, the call-and-response rhythm remained with him long after the performance, "allowing ... Towerson time to write the words down in his log aboard ship."⁷⁵² RF Thompson argues here that the structure of call-and-response enables Towerson's remembering and recalling of a single phrase, in that the force of the rhythm and phrasing imprinted on Towerson so strongly that he could recall and remember the chorus after the performance had ended. For RF Thompson, while Towerson and his writing operate as that which is said to have happened, the influence of call-and-response intervene as evidence of local African and audible knowledge of that which is said to have happened.⁷⁵³

⁷⁵¹ RF Thompson, *African Art in Motion: Icon and Act in the Collection of Katherine Coryton White* (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1974), 29.

⁷⁵² RF Thompson, *African Art in Motion: Icon and Act in the Collection of Katherine Coryton White* (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1974), 29.

⁷⁵³ Thompson substantiates this by noting a similar twentieth-century Nigerian refrain, "kere kere yan, kere kere yan." He also claims Spanish Golden Age plays and poetry had numerous examples of call-and-response singing, because Spain had a large population of "slaves from many parts of the coast by the end of the sixteenth century." Thus,

Another possibility exists here, namely that Towerson's writing may silence local West African translators. After seeing the West Africans' homes, their woodcarving and work activities, and the dancing, Towerson writes, "After that we had well marked all things we departed."⁷⁵⁴ In that moment, "the Captaine of the other towne" sent two representatives with grain samples to Towerson, "and made us signes," and "shewed us his Graines," so if the Europeans returned the town residents would sell to them.⁷⁵⁵ Local residents, after allowing the European visitors in and showing them some of their lives, then indicated a willingness to trade grain with them. These residents also communicated with various signs, perhaps with gestures or through local Africans who had fluency in some European languages. Towerson, then, could have written about the song and dance also based on descriptions given to him by local African translators. Pushing this even further, Towerson's transcription of the song could have come from local African residents

the playwrights and poets "had sharp ears for nuance and speech rhythms overheard in the black baorrios of the cities." He specifically cites the ending chorus to Simón de Aguado's *Entremés de Negros* (1602), comparing it to the montuno movement of a mambo piece from Puerto Rican communities in twentieth-century Spanish Harlem. In his later publications, RF Thompson ties the mambo explicitly to West Central Africans and enslaved persons with Kongo heritages in the Americas. See RF Thompson, *Tango: The Art History of Love* (New York: Pantheon Books, 2005), 83, 158; Ned Sublette, *Cuba and Its Music: From the First Drums to the Mambo* (Chicago: Chicago Review Press, Incorporated, 2004) 53-54. For more analyses of dialects attributed to characters from sub-Saharan Africa in Golden Age Theatre, see John Beusterien, *An Eye on Race: Perspectives from Theater in Imperial Spain* (Lewisburg, Pennsylvania: Bucknell University Press, 2006) 108, 114, 121-122, 129-130; Baltasar Fra Molinero, *La imagen de los negros en el teatro del Siglo de Oro* (Madrid: Siglo XXI de España Editores, S.A., 1995) 21-25. For linguistic scholars, see Natalie Vodovozova, "A Contribution to the History of the *Villancico de Negros*," (Master's Thesis, University of British Columbia, 1996) 35-37.

⁷⁵⁴ "The first voyage of Master William Towrson Marchant of London, to the coast of Guinea, with two Ships, in the yeere 1555," in *The Principal Navigations*, ed., Richard Hakluyt, Vol 6, 177-211 (New York: AMS Press, Inc., 1965) 185.

⁷⁵⁵ "The first voyage of Master William Towrson ..." in *The Principal Navigations*, Vol 6, 185.

repeating the lyrics for him. Towerson's recollection of this particular phrase may not only be due to the strength of the call-and-response form. Just as several European writers and editors, from Cadamosto to Ramusio to Hakluyt, potentially influenced how Towerson wrote about savagery, goats, and dancing along the River Sino, there may also be many silenced local West African sources behind Towerson's written log.

In correlation to Jobson, Towerson notes several moments where the local West Africans appear hesitant and cautious to allow Europeans into their community. Since Towerson writes in the middle of the sixteenth century, French, Portuguese, Spanish, and Dutch factors traded and held territories throughout West Africa. Portuguese pilots also often served on other European ships, and European ships also hired African pilots.⁷⁵⁶ Local African residents would have been aware of intra-European conflicts, as well as the variety in European languages and how Europeans assessed lands for mineral extraction and trade. Both Cadamosto, who came well before Towerson, and Hawkins, who came just after Towerson, experienced significant armed resistance from local West Africans.⁷⁵⁷ Within the town, Towerson mentions the shape and design of the houses, as well as the work taking

⁷⁵⁶ Forbes, *Africans and Native Americans: The Language of Race and the Evolution of Red and Black Peoples* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1993) 3, 7, 14, 30, 153, 209, 210; Rediker and Linebaugh, *The Many-Headed Hydra: Sailors, Slaves, Commoners, and the Hidden History of the Revolutionary Atlantic* (Boston: Beacon Press, 2013) 31, 129, 138, 152, 226; "The second voyage made by the R. W. sir John Hawkins knight .../The voyage made by M. John Hawkins Esquire and afterward knight ..." in *The Principal Navigations*, ed., Richard Hakluyt, Vol 10, 9-63 (New York: AMS Press, Inc., 1965) 16-17; Kelsey, *Sir John Hawkins: Queen Elizabeth's Slave Trader*, 61, 313 fn 78.

⁷⁵⁷ Ca' da Mosto, "The Voyages of Cadamosto," in *The Voyages of Cadamosto: And Other Documents on Western Africa in the Second Half of the Fifteenth Century*, transl and ed GR Crone, 1-84. (London: Hakluyt Society, 1937) 56-59; "The second voyage made by the R. W. sir John Hawkins knight .../The voyage made by M. John Hawkins Esquire and afterward knight ..." in *The Principal Navigations*, vol 10, 16.

place directly around and underneath the homes. Then, he describes the dancing. After that, the Europeans observe more, and turn to leave.

I want to emphasize here: Towerson does not write of seeing the fields or places of crop production. The Africans wait, until the Europeans are leaving without having exacted violence, to show the grains. But they do allow the Europeans to witness a song and dance performance. It is conceivable that these local West Africans, who appear wary enough to keep their most valued trade goods out of sight, could have set up the song and dance performance to divert and distract the European visitors. Because while the Europeans remained watching the singing and dancing, Towerson could only write what happened and serve as a source of that which is said to have happened, in direct relation to the performance in front of him and his men. These Africans in this town exerted no small degree of control over the European gaze, knowing as they did the trade goods valued by Europeans and the potential for violence from European visitors. This moment of singing and dancing offers a potential silence denied, in that the local West Africans may have wielded the diversion of a performance to deny European access to their fields and valuable trade goods.

For this brief section on silences denied, I have again relied on agreement between European-language sources as that which is said to have happened, namely that local West by the middle of the sixteenth century, already perceived Europeans as a threat. Yet, if European travelers did not hesitate to write of African women like goats, with extended breasts, and if editors did not excise these descriptions, why would writers or editors have hesitated to include descriptions of rituals and dancing? What did Europeans have to *gain* by writing aspects of sub-Saharan life as inaccessible to their gaze and, by extension, their readers' knowledge?

To this point, Bosman, in writing of no silences denied effectively writes himself with the full imaginative control over where and how imagined Black bodies, dancing and otherwise, can

work, dance, sing, speak, create, and so on. Bosman's writing, in contrast to previous European spectators in West Africa, claims full European access to conquer and generate knowledge about imaginary Black bodies. Bosman, in other words, fashions the legitimated and factual imagined European body of conquest as the only embodied source of what happened and that which is said to have happened in West Africa. Only the European imperial and colonizing presence can bring humanity to West Africa, and only the European imperial and colonizing *ideal human* presence create and narrate factual knowledge about West African cultures and societies.

LOPES AND PIGAFETTA

*[T]hey dance and move their feet, as it were in a Moresco, with great gravetie and
sobrietie.*⁷⁵⁸

Now, let's return to our hook throughout this dissertation: the *moresca* briefly described by Lopes and Pigafetta in the Kongo court. Even though the Lopes and Pigafetta *moresca* has remained the hook throughout, my narrative largely encompassed a history of a history of imagining West African embodied knowledge traveling into North American territories. The narrative turned out like this, based on the interdependence of prevailing scholarship relating to the dance repertoires of mock combat, located separately in West Central Africa and Europe. By recuperating West African repertoires of leaping and mock combat, I questioned the exclusion of West Africa from scholarship on leaping and mock combat. Now, as we did with Towerson, Jobson, de Marees, and Bosman, let's

⁷⁵⁸ Duarte Lopes and Filippo Pigafetta, "A report of the Kingdome of Congo, a region of Affrica," in *Purchas his Pilgrimes* ..., trans. Abraham Hartwell and ed. Samuel Purchas, Vol. 2, bk 7, chap IIII [sic], 986-1026 (London: Printed by William Stansby for Henrie Fetherstone, 1625) 1020.

expand our examination of the Lopes and Pigafetta source. I'll endeavor to ascertain if the Lopes and Pigafetta *moresca* forges imagined Black bodies, dancing and otherwise, through noble decorum, or savage and bestial belonging.

In their "Report on the Kingdome of Congo," Lopes and Pigafetta repeatedly emphasize the longstanding Christian beliefs of the Kongo court. They relay how Dom João II extended Portuguese exploration down the coast of Africa, and how the King of Kongo became King Afonso I in 1491.⁷⁵⁹ They describe a neighboring people group, the Anzichi, as savages, with impressive leaping and turning in their military maneuvers. Specifically, the Anzichi use, "wonderfull speed and nimbleness to manage their weapons, that whirling them round about ... they keep compasse of the ayre."⁷⁶⁰ The Anzichi turn so skillfully, that when the enemy's arrow comes, their hatchet strikes the arrow from the air. They can predict where the arrow will fall and how to time their leap and turn to intercept and destroy the weapon with their hatchets. Lopes and Pigafetta also note that the Anzichi, "are very active and nimble, and leape up and down the Mountaines like Goats."⁷⁶¹

From these descriptions, Lopes and Pigafetta use similar tactics as both Hawkins and Towerson. The imagined Black bodies of Anzichi warriors leap and turn in amazing feats of athletic combat, successfully striking down arrows in mid-flight. And like Cadamosto and Towerson, the imagined Black bodies of Anzichi also move across mountainous terrain like nimble goats. In respect to the Anzichi, Lopes and Pigafetta may appear to be composing their imagined Black bodies as savage and bestial. They do, however, describe how noble Anzichi dress by fully covering their bodies.

⁷⁵⁹ Lopes and Pigafetta, 1009-1010.

⁷⁶⁰ Lopes and Pigafetta, 992.

⁷⁶¹ Lopes and Pigafetta, 993.

Lopes and Pigafetta first write “The common sort goe naked from the girdle upwards, and without any thing upon their heads, having their haire trussed up, and curled.”⁷⁶² They contrast nobility, “The Noblemen are apparelled in Silkes and other Cloth, and weare upon their heads, blue and red, and blacke colours, and Hats and Hoods of Portugall.”⁷⁶³ For women, they note, “The women are all covered from top to toe, after the manner of Africa.”⁷⁶⁴ In addition, “Noble women and such as are of wealth, doe weare certain Mantles, which they cast over their heads, but keepe their faces open and are at libertie.”⁷⁶⁵ Lopes and Pigafetta take care to distinguish, even among the savage Anzichi, between the nobles and the poorer people. They compose imagined Black and noble male bodies dressed similarly to Portuguese custom, and imagined Black and noble female bodies dressed “from top to toe, after the manner of Africa.” The custom of African women, for Lopes and Pigafetta, does not encompass nakedness or savage bestial appearances.

When Lopes and Pigafetta turn to describe the Kongo court, they explain how the clothing customs changed after Christianity. The clothing of the men consisted of several layers, one made from palm trees, one from the “delicate and daintie skinnies” from small predators, a cape that also served as a hood, and a garment which hung down to their knees before turning back up to their right shoulder. On this shoulder, the men could have a zebra’s tail, to indicate past courage or bravery.⁷⁶⁶ The noblemen also wore square caps of red and yellow. The women, again prior to Christianity, also wore several layers of clothing. One layer reached down to their heels, another to their knees. Another layer over top, hung from under their shoulders, which Lopes and Pigafetta

⁷⁶² Lopes and Pigafetta, 993.

⁷⁶³ Lopes and Pigafetta, 993.

⁷⁶⁴ Lopes and Pigafetta, 993.

⁷⁶⁵ Lopes and Pigafetta, 993.

⁷⁶⁶ Lopes and Pigafetta, 1018-1019.

compare “like a kind of Doublet or Jacket,” to their waists.⁷⁶⁷ Over this, the women then wore a cape or cloak.⁷⁶⁸ For poorer men and women, they were dressed only from the waist down like Lopes and Pigafetta noted for the Anzichi. Even before Christian conversion, Lopes and Pigafetta describe the Kongolese court, the nobles, as fully clothed in layers of various kinds of materials.

After accepting Christianity, the noblemen “beganne to apparell themselves after the manner of the Portugalls,” in that they dressed in cloaks, “Spanish Caps and Tabbards, or wide Jackets of Scarlet, and cloth of Silke.”⁷⁶⁹ Noblemen at the Kongo court changed to wearing hats after Portuguese fashion, as well as shoes in velvet or leather. Noblewomen, Lopes and Pigafetta explain “also goe after the Portugal fashion, saving that they weare no Cloakes, but upon their heads they have certaine Veiles, and upon their Veiles blacke Velvet caps, garnished with Jewels, and Chaines of Gold about their neckes.”⁷⁷⁰ Again, they take space to note that these descriptions apply to the nobility at the Kongo court, not the entire country. The imagined Black and noble bodies remain fully clothed, just as they were prior to Christian conversion. The kinds of cloth used by the nobles change significantly, from palm trees and skins, to velvet and silk. The clothing styles do not bring civilization, in terms of covering the bodies properly, as much as they bring greater global wealth to the Kongo court.

Given this, the Kongolese moresca stands in stark contrast to much of what we saw previously in this chapter. Lopes and Pigafetta classify the Anzichi as savages, who leap and twirl and move like goats. But, their women go about covered from head to toe. Lopes and Pigafetta classify the Kongo nobles as Christians, who went about fully clothed even prior to their conversion.

⁷⁶⁷ Lopes and Pigafetta, 1019.

⁷⁶⁸ Lopes and Pigafetta, 1019.

⁷⁶⁹ Lopes and Pigafetta, 1019.

⁷⁷⁰ Lopes and Pigafetta, 1019.

Lopes and Pigafetta, as southern Europeans writing for European readerships, composed a Kongo court evoking a noble grace and decorum towards which European readers could relate. When they reach the kinds of music and dance, then, Lopes and Pigafetta have set their readers up to imagine the Kongo court in relation to – not necessarily equivalent, but certainly not in contrast to – performance practices at European courts.

Lopes and Pigafetta take time to describe a lute-like instrument found at the Kongo court. They note their admiration for the skill of musicians, who can “utter the conceits of their minds” just by “touching and striking this [lute].”⁷⁷¹ In the court, nobles “doe dance in good measure with their feet, and follow the just time of that Musicke, with clapping the palmes of their hands one against the other.”⁷⁷² Lopes and Pigafetta compose imagined Black and noble dancing bodies dancing in time, to the music, and clapping to the beat. But, in this phrasing, the Italian for “dance in good measure” was “danzano a misura.”⁷⁷³ The Portuguese traveler and Italian humanist connected the Kongo court performance to *misura*, the fifteenth-century concept developed by Italian dancing masters to evoke the moderate elegance and grace required of noble decorum. Pigafetta, as a noted humanist, would have understood the connotations of deploying this particular word in relation to a court performance. After this, Lopes and Pigafetta mention the use of other flutes and pipes in the Kongo court, “and according to the sound, they dance and move their feet, as it were in a Moresco, with great gravetie and sobrietie.”⁷⁷⁴

Overall, then, Lopes and Pigafetta depict the Kongo court very closely to concepts of noble decorum developed for European courts. The imagined Black dancing bodies here, with their

⁷⁷¹ Lopes and Pigafetta, 1020.

⁷⁷² Lopes and Pigafetta, 1020.

⁷⁷³ Lopes and Pigafetta, *Relatione del Reame di Congo et delle Circonvicine Contrade*, (Rome, 1591) 69.

⁷⁷⁴ Lopes and Pigafetta, 1020.

elaborate and royal attire, move with the moderation and grace expected of European aristocracy. Lopes and Pigafetta include percussive accompaniment, with the clapping, while also highlighting how the imagined Black and noble dancing bodies move in time with the music. In this performance, as portrayed by Lopes and Pigafetta, we do not see savage or inhuman beasts, inevitably drawn to the ground or in need of European civilization. We see a foreign court, with whom Portugal regularly traded. We see a foreign court, upon whom Portugal depended for access to trade goods and enslaved captives from the interior. We see a foreign court, which appointed Lopes as their ambassador to the Pope, moving in danced rhythms and forms recognizable to European readerships as evidence of the noble and ideal human. In this source, while Lopes and Pigafetta create the report as the embodied sources of that which is said to have happened, they also forge the imagined Black and noble dancing bodies of the Kongo court as capable of carrying embodied knowledge of the ideal human. In their composition, imagined Black and noble dancing bodies from the Kongo court belong in historical narratives of the ideal human as embodied in danced movements and rhythms. And yet, somewhere along the way, these imagined dancing bodies became illegitimated and disqualified, and the Kongolese moresca dropped out of historical time.

CONCLUSION

*... then they back'd off one of his Arms, and still he bore up, and held his Pipe.*⁷⁷⁵

I began this dissertation with a question of why the Lopes and Pigafetta moresca has not yet been qualified or legitimated as an event in historical narratives of African Diasporic performance practices. I explained how historical narratives of Black dance and Africanist aesthetics drew on Jim Crow's dancing body as a derivative derogation of sub-Saharan danced repertoires. Knowledge of Black dance remains inextricable from the alloy formed through minstrelsy coercion. I demonstrated how written sources about European court performance created an imagined dancing body for documentation and preservation. European dance masters and philosophers synthesized humanist knowledge of the ideal human with the danced repertoires of European nobles. They set the groundwork for a historiographic kinship whereby choreographed ballet qualified as historical knowledge of dance events. Finally, I analyzed how European travelers and spectators, alongside the gradual emergence of the imagined Europeanist dancing body as knowledge of the ideal human, persistently negated and displaced the imagined Black dancing bodies of West Africans into savage and bestial movement. Their work disqualified and negated imagined Black dancing bodies from furnishing or bringing forth embodied knowledge worthy of being preserved for future narratives.

⁷⁷⁵ Aphra Behn, *Oroonoko, or The Royal Slave, a True History* (London, 1688), 238.

When I returned to Lopes and Pigafetta, to examine the source in detail in relation to the “fundamentally processual character of historical production,” I noted how they forged a kinship of noble decorum between nobles of the Kongo empire and the ideal European and noble human.⁷⁷⁶ The Kongolese moresca in the Lopes and Pigafetta source continues to stand as an outlier, outside of the scope of prevailing narratives of trans-Atlantic coercion and enslavement. While Lopes and Pigafetta qualified the imagined Black dancing bodies of Kongo nobles for future historical narratives, the process of producing historical narratives also generated the imagined ballet body and imagined Black and enslaved dancing body in counterpoint. Given the weight of European-centered narratives on the ideal human, how did Lopes and Pigafetta conceive of Kongolese nobility? Given all the sources and scholarship discussed in this dissertation, it seems nearly impossible that both a Portuguese trader and Italian humanist were capable of imagining West Central Africans as embodying noble decorum.

For instance, if I continued the narrative into the eighteenth century, the violence written into and through imagined Black dancing bodies would only increase. The eighteenth century amplifies what Saidiya Hartman terms, “the torturous display of the captive body.”⁷⁷⁷ Imagined Black dancing bodies would end up disarticulated into literal pieces and parts, such as when Aphra Behn, above, describes Oroonoko enduring his lynching with apparent calm. Even as the executioner mutilates and cuts his body, Oroonoko merely smokes his pipe. It is not until they cut off his other arm, where Oroonoko drops his pipe and dies, “without a Groan, or a Reproach.”⁷⁷⁸ Throughout the lynching scene, Behn asks her readers to imagine Oroonoko’s stillness and

⁷⁷⁶ Trouillot, *Silencing the Past*, 28.

⁷⁷⁷ Saidiya V. Hartman, *Scenes of Subjection: Terror, Slavery, and Self-Making in Nineteenth-Century America* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1997) 52.

⁷⁷⁸ Aphra Behn, *Oroonoko*, 238.

resilience, his body's remarkable ability to endure extreme pain and torture, while still smoking his pipe. The juxtaposition of the systematic dismembering of his body and Oroonoko's calm is unsettling, and ultimately, well in line with how European spectators, both travelers and abolitionists, narrated and disarticulated imagined Black bodies in written sources throughout the eighteenth century.

The eighteenth century brings up abolitionist campaigns, where abolitionists also write and depict excessive torture and pain, because they sought to emphasize the inhumanity of trauma exacted on and through imagined enslaved bodies. Hannah More, for instance, was a prolific writer and staunch abolitionist. She composed "Slavery, a Poem," to accompany William Wilberforce's 1788 petition to Parliament for abolishing the slave trade. Her poem deliberates on the extent of trauma exacted onto imagined Black bodies:

When the fierce Sun darts vertical his beams,
And thirst and hunger mix their wild extremes;
When the sharp iron * wounds his inmost soul,
And his strain'd eyes in burning anguish roll;
Will the parch'd negro find, ere he expire,
No pain in hunger, and no heat in fire?

More renders the captive sub-Saharan under a harsh sun, thirsty and hungry, chained and in pain. The pain of the enslaved captive body here, overwhelms every sensation. As "his strain'd eyes in burning anguish roll," the pains of hunger recede and the heat of fire seems inconsequential. More wants Parliament to imagine the extreme deprivation and violence exacted onto enslaved bodies, such that their bodies lose the instincts for survival to sustain their own lives. They cease to feel hunger pains, as do those people under famine and prolonged starvation. Their bodies are so

overwhelmed and besieged by lack, they will not even feel the heat in fire; slavery may very well force them to destroy their own bodies and lives.

So that Parliament will not pass over this imagery as exaggeration, More includes a note:

This is not said figuratively. The writer of these lines has seen a complete set of chains, fitted to every separate limb of these unhappy, innocent men; together with instruments for wrenching open the jaws, contrived with such ingenious cruelty⁷⁷⁹

More wields herself as a witness, as an embodied source of what happened and that which is said to have happened, to sway the men of Parliament to abolish the slave trade. Her words, just as those of Jobson and de Marees and Bosman, subsume and consume the imagined Black bodies. More's tactics, however, leave imagined Black bodies utterly riven and broken through traumatic violence.

The eighteenth century, in correlation to the intensification of abolitionist campaigns, also generates the bulk of written sources on Dancing the Slaves. Soon after Behn published *Oroonoko*, and just before Thomas Southerne's adaptation debuted, Captain Thomas Phillips wrote and then circulated his log of a voyage to West Africa and the Americas. In his notes, Phillips gives the first English-language source of Dancing the Slaves:

We often at sea in the evenings would let the slaves come up into the sun to air themselves, and make them jump and dance for an hour or two to our bag-pipes, harp, and fiddle, by which exercise to preserve them in health.⁷⁸⁰

⁷⁷⁹ Hannah More, "On Slavery," in *Oroonoko: Adaptations and Offshoots*, ed., Susan B. Iwanisziw (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2006) 257.

⁷⁸⁰ Commander Thomas Phillips, "A Journal of a Voyage Made in the Hannibal of London, Ann. 1693,1694, from England to Cape Monseradoe, in Africa, and Thence Along the Coast of Guiney to Whydah, the Island of St. Thomas, and so forward to Barbadoes. With a cursory account of the Country, the People, their Manners, Fort, Trade,

In Captain Phillips's journal, the enslaved and imagined Black dancing body jumps to European musical instruments. The imagined Black dancing body serves primarily as an enslaved and embodied source of the captain's strategies to increase revenue. Dancing, in the log of Captain Phillips, furnishes and brings forth knowledge of investment value and potential future return. In other words, Captain Phillips animates the imagined Black dancing bodies for the unnamed corporate investors, so they both may participate in spectating and consuming enslaved bodies as yet-to-be vested returns.

Dancing the Slaves became an important point of query for Parliament investigators into the slave trade. In fact, the bulk of preserved written sources on Dancing the Slaves comes from the abolition hearings in British Parliament, the hearings advocated for by Wilberforce and More and many other abolitionists. In the competing testimonies of naval surgeons and slave traders, the imagined Black dancing body fragments and fractures under the weight of European deliberations over the extent of physical pain experienced or endured by enslaved captives. Even though abolitionists fought slave traders in testimony before Parliament, they all wielded similar tactics of dismemberment, and thus negation.⁷⁸¹ Abolitionist campaigns only intensified and deepened the disarticulation of imagined Black dancing bodies from being able to serve as embodied sources of what happened and that which is said to have happened.

Moving forward in time, coercion and dehumaning increases in correlation to the rise of European empires and then empires descended from European colonists. Should we attend to the

&c," in Awnsham Churchill and John Churchill, *A Collection of Voyages, Some Now First Printed from Original Manuscripts*, Vol. 6 (London: 1704–1732) 230.

⁷⁸¹ See, for example, *Abridgment of the Minutes of the Evidence Taken Before a Committee of the Whole House, to whom it was referred to consider of the slave trade* (Great Britain: Parliament House of Commons, 1789): testimony by Mr. Claxton, a surgeon's mate 17-18; and testimony by Frazer, who served as a second mate, chief mate, and commander, 11-12.

accumulation of *silences denied*, and the sites wherein European and European-descended spectators cannot serve as that which is said to have happened? If coercion and silence remain the primary parameters for assessing the capability for *belonging while Black*, how might I locate other parameters through which to configure the Lopes and Pigafetta moresca as belonging within historical narratives of Black dance?

I'm deliberating over this, in particular based on my discussion of Archimedes and the water displaced by the goldsmith's alloy crown. The second level of displacement configured displaced water, or in this case dispossessed and enslaved persons, as the only narrative, the only historiographically significant result, the end game. Thus, when scholars turn to analyze continuity and change in sub-Saharan dance repertoires, they are always already working from the after-effects of oppression and enslavement. Scholars are left with narratives of uplift or regression, of progressing towards equality or unable to progress beyond their oppressed origins.⁷⁸² *If*, then, the displaced water offers the illusion of no other narratives; and *if* oppression and enslavement, displacement and coercion, are not the only historiographic end game, what other narratives can I *imagine* for sub-Saharan and their danced repertoires?

I am considering as well, the point of exploring the interdependence exerted by the imagined Europeanist and ballet body. Scholars *know* the moresca and morris as exotic or non-European, partly based on the field of power exerted by the imagined ballet body on *how* scholars know *when* and *where* and *who caused* dance to happen. Furthermore, scholars *know* the moresca and morris belong in dance history, because of their kinship to the complex danced narratives which would come to characterize ballet de cour in the French court. Historiographically speaking, what if the

⁷⁸² Michelle M. Wright, *Physics of Blackness: Beyond the Middle Passage Epistemology* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press) 8.

field of power exerted through the imagined ballet body also prohibits scholars from seriously questioning: *why do the movements and rhythms of the moresca and morris qualify as foreign or exotic to Europe?* Put another way, what if the invention and creation of ballet instantiated an aesthetic break to erase and silence the longstanding imbrication of *what would become known as* non-European dance repertoires within court practices?

What if Lopes and Pigafetta could imagine nobles in the Kongo empire as carrying and transmitting embodied knowledge of the ideal human, because of the racialized instability “between religiously-coded racism and color-coded racism?”⁷⁸³ As scholars from Walter Mignolo to David Nirenberg and Kathryn Burns remind us, *la raza* or race, moved from meaning traceable blood-lines of thoroughbred horses to meaning traceable blood-lines of Christian, Muslim, and Jewish faith.⁷⁸⁴ European desiring of and imagining the capacity for religious purity pre-dated and contributed to later European desiring of and imagining the capacity for color-coded, continental, ie *White*, purity. That is, before European nobles imagined their continental heritages as *White*, they first imagined their continental heritages as *Christian*. For Lopes and Pigafetta then, *Christians* in the Kongo empire could embody noble decorum of the ideal human. And Christian nobles could dance the moresca in the Kongolese court, just as European nobles danced the moresca in their own courts.

⁷⁸³ Margaret R. Greer, Walter D. Mignolo, and Maureen Quilligan, “Introduction” in *Rereading the Black Legend: The Discourses of Religious and Racial Difference in the Renaissance Empires*, eds. Margaret R. Greer, Walter D. Mignolo, and Maureen Quilligan, 1-24 (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2007) 2.

⁷⁸⁴ Margaret R. Greer, Walter D. Mignolo, and Maureen Quilligan, “Introduction” in *Rereading the Black Legend*, 12-14; David Nirenberg, “Race and the Middle Ages: The Case of Spain and Its Jews,” in *Rereading the Black Legend*, 71-87, 77-81; Kathryn Burns, “Unfixing Race,” in *Rereading the Black Legend*, 188-202, 188-190; Walter D. Mignolo, “Afterwords: What Does the Black Legend Have to Do with Race?” in *Rereading the Black Legend*, 312-324.

Configuring the Lopes and Pigafetta moresca within European ideals of Christian and noble decorum makes visible the final silenced dancing body in this dissertation: the imagined *Moorish* dancing body. Here, the imagined Moorish dancing body will encompass imagined dancing bodies with Muslim heritages. I use the word *heritage*, in order to emphasize the racialized implications of religion in the Medieval and Early Modern eras, as noted above. I use the word *Moorish*, in order to emphasize and remind us of the specific categorical volatility between Moor and Negro. As several scholars from Imtiaz Habib, Nelson H. Mannich, and Barbara Fuchs note, usage of *mauro* or *moro* or Moor often related directly to usage of Ethiopian and Negro, such that these terms could be used interchangeably.⁷⁸⁵ I also use Moorish to evoke Muslim heritages, as a mean of highlighting the trans-continental belonging for this particular imagined dancing body. Muslims and Moors lived *throughout* Europe, Africa, and Asia. Even in Aphra Behn's novel, *Oroonoko* stands as both Coromantin and Moor, which could qualify him as continental African *and* Black, as well as qualifying him as sub-Saharan African *and* Muslim *and* Black.

Specifically, within my own narrative throughout, the imagined Moorish dancing body has appeared and disappeared repeatedly. When I examined European-language scholars on the moresca and morris, I noted how these scholars discounted Moorish or Muslim influence based only on European-language sources. That is, *despite* seventeenth-century European-language sources, which drew moresca and morris as directly descended from a Spanish dance of Morocco, scholars from

⁷⁸⁵ Fuchs, "The Spanish Race," in *Rereading the Black Legend*, 88-98, 88; Habib, *Black Lives in the English Archives*, 27-37; Nelson H. Minnich, "The Catholic Church and the Pastoral Care of Black Africans in Renaissance Italy," in *Black Africans in Renaissance Europe*, 282. For primary source examples, see De Marees, *Description and Historical Account of the Gold Kingdom of Guinea (1602)*, 167-170; "A voiage made out of England unto Guinea and Benin in Affrike, at the charges of certaine marchants Adventurers of the Citie of London in the yeere of our Lord 1553," in *The Principal Navigations Voyages Traffiques & Discoveries of the English Nation*, Vol 6 (New York: AMS Press, Inc. 1965) 143.

John Forrest to Jennifer Nevile configured the related repertoires as a European antecedent to ballet de cour.⁷⁸⁶ These dance scholars drew this conclusion in contrast to the early work of Ingrid Brainard, a prominent and pioneering Early Modern dance scholar, who connected the appearance of the moresca to the Moorish presence in southern Europe.⁷⁸⁷ The imagined Moorish dancing body appears as the disputed and displaced origin of Muslim influences on the morris and moresca, which potentially relates to the ways Jim Crow's imagined Black dancing body enacts the disputed and displaced origins of sub-Saharan influences.

When I worked through the intellectual relationship of divine proportions and achieving harmony with the universe, I drew on concepts written and developed by the Brethren of Purity, Ikwāhn al-Safā, in the tenth century CE.⁷⁸⁸ The Brethren of Purity could access this text, because of the large-scale preservation and translations of ancient philosophical work by Muslim scholars and libraries in Asia and Europe.⁷⁸⁹ And, as several scholars have pointed out, Europe *could* experience a rebirth or renaissance, humanists *could* invoke ancient authority for their modern era and their historiographic philosophies, *because* Muslim cultures and polities preserved and studied ancient and

⁷⁸⁶ John Forrest, *The History of Morris Dancing, 1458-1750* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1999) 91, 251, 361; Jennifer Nevile, "The Early Dance Manuals and the Structure of Ballet: A Basis for Italian, French and English Ballet," in *The Cambridge Companion to Ballet*, ed. Marion Kant, 9-18 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007).

⁷⁸⁷ Brainard, "An Exotic Court Dance and Dance Spectacle: La Moresca," in *International Musicological Society, Report of the Twelfth Congress*, Berkeley (1977): 715-716 (712-729).

⁷⁸⁸ Ian Richard Netton, *Muslim Neoplatonists: An Introduction to the Thought of the Brethren of Purity* (London: RoutledgeCurzon, 2002) 9-15, 31, 35; Danielson, Virginia, Scott Marcus, and Dwight Reynolds, eds. "Arabic Writings on Music: Eighth to Nineteenth Centuries." *Garland Encyclopedia of World Music*, Vol 6 - The Middle East. Routledge, Array, 392-415, 396-398. Accessed July 25, 2016.<http://search.alexanderstreet.com/view/work/1000229140>.

⁷⁸⁹ Jim Al-Khalili, *The House of Wisdom: How Arabic Science Saved Ancient Knowledge and Gave Us the Renaissance* (New York: Penguin Press, 2011).

classical texts.⁷⁹⁰ Moreover, Europe could undertake nautical exploration of the Atlantic, because of Muslims' navigational science and because of Europeans' desire to directly access sub-Saharan African and East Asian wealth without Muslim traders in-between.

Additionally, when I mapped sub-Saharan presence into southern Europe, I noted the role of Muslim and Moorish traders as middlemen. Moreover, every time I wrote of enslaved persons being forced to dance or enslaved uprisings, Muslim captives were part of that history. When I followed enslaved sub-Saharan Africans, I also followed Moorish and Muslim captives to the Americas.⁷⁹¹ When I explored the writing of Jobson and travelers on the Gold Coast, I explored locations with longstanding ties to Muslim cultures. Namely, "Between the tenth and eighteenth centuries, a succession of Sudanic Kingdoms—Ghana, Mali, Kanem, Songhay, Hausaland, and Dogomba—was organized under the banner of Islam, incorporating Mandinka, Fula, Susu, Ashanti, Hausa, and other nations."⁷⁹² When Jobson traveled down the River Gambia, he traveled through the heart of what remained of the Mali Empire (c. 1230 CE–c. 1600 CE). When de Marees and Bosman, and all the travelers and writers in between from Barbot to Dapper to Davity to Astley, wrote of the Gold Coast, they wrote of a region influenced by Islam since the tenth century CE.⁷⁹³

⁷⁹⁰ Al-Khalili, *The House of Wisdom*; John Freely, *Light from the East: How the Science of Medieval Islam Helped to Shape the Western World* (London: I. B. Taurus, 2015); Jonathan Lyons, *Islam through Western Eyes: From the Crusades to the War on Terrorism* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2012) 73-110.

⁷⁹¹ Sultana Afroz, "From Moors to Marronage: The Islamic Heritage of the Maroons in Jamaica," in *Journal of Muslim Minority Affairs* 19:2 (1999): 161-179; Edward E. Curtis, IV, *The Call of Bilal: Islam in the African Diaspora* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2014); Michael A. Gomez, *Exchanging Our Country Marks: The Transformation of African Identities in the Colonial and Antebellum South* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1998) 59-87.

⁷⁹² Sultana Afroz, "From Moors to Marronage," 161.

⁷⁹³ Nehemia Levitzion, *Ancient Ghana and Mali* (New York: Africana Publishing Company, 1980).

Notice how, by even briefly calling attention to a pervasively silenced Moorish and Muslim presence, I have still consistently contrasted Muslim and Moorish to European. While I set up a means for us to relate Moorish and Muslim to trans-continental belonging and West Africa in particular, I have not questioned the *imagined* division between a Christian Europe and a Moorish or Muslim foreigner. As Ross Brann argues, “*Moor* arguably served the principal linguistic vehicle for ... rendering Andalusí Muslims as others in a projected Christian Iberia.”⁷⁹⁴ Moor became the imaginary of Muslims not-belonging within Europe. Moor “enabled Christians in thirteenth-century Castile to dismiss as “foreign” the substantially mixed Andalusí Muslim population to their south ... and to disregard the extent of social and cultural ties among all Andalusis, including Muslims from Africa.”⁷⁹⁵ In other words, the Moor became foreign, Black, exotic, and non-European in an imaginary where Europe is always already Christian.

Bringing in this final piece may appear to inadvertently affirm European-focused scholarship on the moresca and morris. After all, written sources on these dances emerge in relation to the gradual and persistent expulsion of Muslim polities and communities from southern Europe. But, I am asking us to imagine *otherwise* from this. I am asking us to imagine a Europe always already engaged in trans-continental trade and exchanges to both Asia and into West Africa. I am asking us to imagine a Europe, whose dances remain largely unwritten and undocumented, with embodied knowledges of noble decorum shifting and being shared across religious and continental divides. I am asking us to imagine that the instantiation of the ideal human in the Renaissance *erased* and *silenced* centuries of Europe as a site of cross-cultural exchanges. In turn, then, we might be able to imagine

⁷⁹⁴ Brann, “The Moors?” in *Medieval Encounters* 15 (2009): 313 (307-318).

⁷⁹⁵ Brann, “The Moors?” 313.

how the instantiation of the ideal human in the Renaissance also erased and silenced centuries of sub-Saharan and Muslim and Moorish participation and influence in these cross-cultural exchanges.

If I were able to re-imagine Europe, how might this change historical narratives of dances in the Americas? How else might I interrogate the *imagined silences* from within European humanist and Christian historiography, in order to expose the correlating choreographed erasures of Muslim and sub-Saharan blackness?

In the 1930s, Katherine Dunham visited Jamaica and Haiti to undertake field work, which would inform her Master's Thesis in Anthropology at the University of Chicago. In the 1940s, she published *Journey to Accompong*, a version of her field work notes and journals from her time in Jamaica. While in Jamaica, Dunham stayed with the Maroon communities of Accompong, reportedly descended from the enslaved Koromantyn/Coromantee who repeatedly rose up and rebelled throughout the eighteenth century. Dunham notes, in the book, that she came to “study and take part in the Koromantee war dances most of all.”⁷⁹⁶ She does not get an opportunity to see these war dances until the very end of her site visit.

The war dances included an introductory circling, which to Dunham appeared “much like the warming up of an athlete.”⁷⁹⁷ After this, she and her partner, Henry Rowe, “hop from one foot to the other, feet turned out at right angles to the body.” Dunham compares this to the “well “turned out” in ballet vernacular.”⁷⁹⁸ She continues describing how she and her partner turned away from each other “and walked away,” then they reversed, returning to each other “and hopped together.”⁷⁹⁹ The accompaniment to this war dance, included a woman who “procured a rattle and

⁷⁹⁶ Dunham, *Katherine Dunham's Journey to Accompong* (New York: H. Holt and Company, 1946) 8.

⁷⁹⁷ Dunham, *Journey to Accompong*, 135.

⁷⁹⁸ Dunham, *Journey to Accompong*, 135.

⁷⁹⁹ Dunham, *Journey to Accompong*, 135.

[shook] it in accompaniment” to the man on the drum.⁸⁰⁰ The drum, Dunham relates, had a head of goatskin, with a full tone which evoked “the spirit of some Gold Coast god come to life to grumble a protest against the long silence.”⁸⁰¹ Dunham writes, further, “Some of the men wave sticks in the air, and the women tear off their handkerchiefs and wave them on high as they dance.”⁸⁰²

Then, she and Henry “grabbed each other around the waist and ran circles around each other, first one way, then the other.”⁸⁰³ After this sequence, “we separate into a melee of leaping, shouting warriors.”⁸⁰⁴ As warriors, they engage in maneuvers, “crouching down and advancing in line to attack an imaginary enemy with many feints, swerves, and much pantomime.” Dunham then works with a woman dancer, who performs as “a Maroon woman of the old days working the men up to a pitch where they will descend ... and exterminate one of his Majesty’s red-coated platoons.”⁸⁰⁵ After this, Dunham describes how, “then we were again hopping around each other with knees high in the air, handkerchiefs and skirts flying.”⁸⁰⁶

Per Dunham’s description, the dancing includes partnered exchanges of leaps, hops, and circling about. These sequences call to mind the jumping and wheeling of Jim Crow, as well as the angular and expressive leaps of William “Juba” Lane from the first chapter. By comparing the hopping and leaping to an Irish reel, Dunham alludes to Europeanist influences, much as Gottschild and Hill ascribe these verticalized movements to a Europeanist repertoire. Dunham further evokes a

⁸⁰⁰ Dunham, *Journey to Accompong*, 135.

⁸⁰¹ Dunham, *Journey to Accompong*, 131.

⁸⁰² Dunham, *Journey to Accompong*, 135.

⁸⁰³ Dunham, *Journey to Accompong*, 135.

⁸⁰⁴ Dunham, *Journey to Accompong*, 135.

⁸⁰⁵ Dunham, *Journey to Accompong*, 136.

⁸⁰⁶ Dunham, *Journey to Accompong*, 136.

Europeanist influence, when she relates the angled feet to a ballet-like turn-out. In addition, the men wave sticks in the air, reminiscent of the juegos de cañas from Max Harris's work on moros y cristianos. The staged battle sequences call to mind the mock combat narratives and repertoires in moros y cristianos or the mimed action repertoires within chivalric tournament competitions. The final sequence of hopping, which Dunham writes as "knees high in the air," resembles the moresca and morris, as analyzed by Forrest, Nevile, and Hornback. Underneath it all run the beat, kept by a rattle and a drum, the percussive element noted by scholars of Black dance and by European travel writers like Jobson and de Marees.

At first glance, then, Dunham's version may appear to indicate evidence that Koromantyn Maroons lent their percussive and polyrhythmic sub-Saharan repertoires to a form of the Spanish moros y cristianos or English morris (since both Spain and England held Jamaica at separate times). But, from seventeenth-century European travel writers, we have a potentially wider perspective on the range of dance repertoires and embodied memories available for retention and revision into the Americas. Koromantyn, often spelled as Coromantee, referred to the location of a British factory in West Africa and the Akan-speaking people sold through and purchased at this factory.⁸⁰⁷ Koromantyn/Coromantee, in other words, indicated those enslaved persons who originated from the Gold Coast region of West Africa, such as Oroonoko, the protagonist of Aphra Behn's novel.

Based on de Marees's account, we can see further potential resemblances to Gold Coast repertoires beyond the use of percussion. Recall how de Marees wrote about the women dancing every evening, for an hour or so. In de Marees's version, the women leaped and stamped together, in relation to a partner, and to accompanying instruments. De Marees also wrote of them as "leaping

⁸⁰⁷ Michael A. Gomez, *Exchanging Our Country Marks: The Transformation of African Identities in the Colonial and Antebellum South* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1998) 106-107.

and stamping with one of their feet upon the ground, knocking with their fingers and bowing downe their heads, and speaking to each other.”⁸⁰⁸ The leaping and high stepping noted by Dunham, then, could potentially have traveled from the Gold Coast of West Africa. Since de Marees also writes of Gold Coast men engaging in mock combat and leaping, as part of a celebratory procession, Dunham’s version could also possibly reveal a shifting of male dance repertoires into community repertoires. In other words, by considering de Marees’s version alongside Dunham’s, both Gold Coast and European dance repertoires may have significantly contributed to the development of the Koromantyn/Coromantee war dances in the Accompong maroon community.

But, by exposing the silenced and imagined Moorish dancing body evoked and disappeared from within our ongoing discussion of leaping and mock combat, I might arrive at a very different interpretation. As scholarship stands right now, the ancestors of the Accompong Maroon community, as coming primarily from the Gold Coast, could only have learned leaping and turn-out from Europeanist repertoires. If Europe is always already engaged in trans-continental exchanges prior to the trans-Atlantic trade, then the Koromantyn/Coromantee war dances in Accompong may evidence the capability for imagined Black dancing bodies to carry and transmit evidence of interwoven embodied knowledges into the Americas. Put differently, if West Africa connects into Europe prior to the trans-Atlantic trade, the ancestors of the Accompong Maroon community did not necessarily learn the *moresca* or *morris* repertoires under the coercions of enslavement.

In order to fully prove this, however, much work remains to be done. The extensive Arabic-language sources on music and dancing, from the eighth century on, still need to be explored in

⁸⁰⁸ “A description and historical declaration of the golden Kingdome of Guinea, otherwise called the golden coast of Myna ...” in *Purchas His Pilgrimes: in five booke: the first, contayning the voyages and peregrinations made by ancient kings ... and others, to and thorow ...*, ed., Samuel Purchas, Vol 2, Book 7, Chap 2, 926-970 (London: Printed by William Stansby for Henrie Fetherstone, 1625) 959-960.

relation to Romance-language sources. Ife orature, from West Africa, may also provide critical evidence of connections across the Sahara and Mediterranean.

The work continues.

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- peregrinations made by ancient kings ... and others, to and thorow ...* edited by Samuel Purchas. Vol. 2, bk. 7, chap. 2, 926-970. London, 1625.
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